Issue 27, March 1983

Different Worlds

THE MAGAZINE FOR ADVENTURE ROLE-PLAYERS

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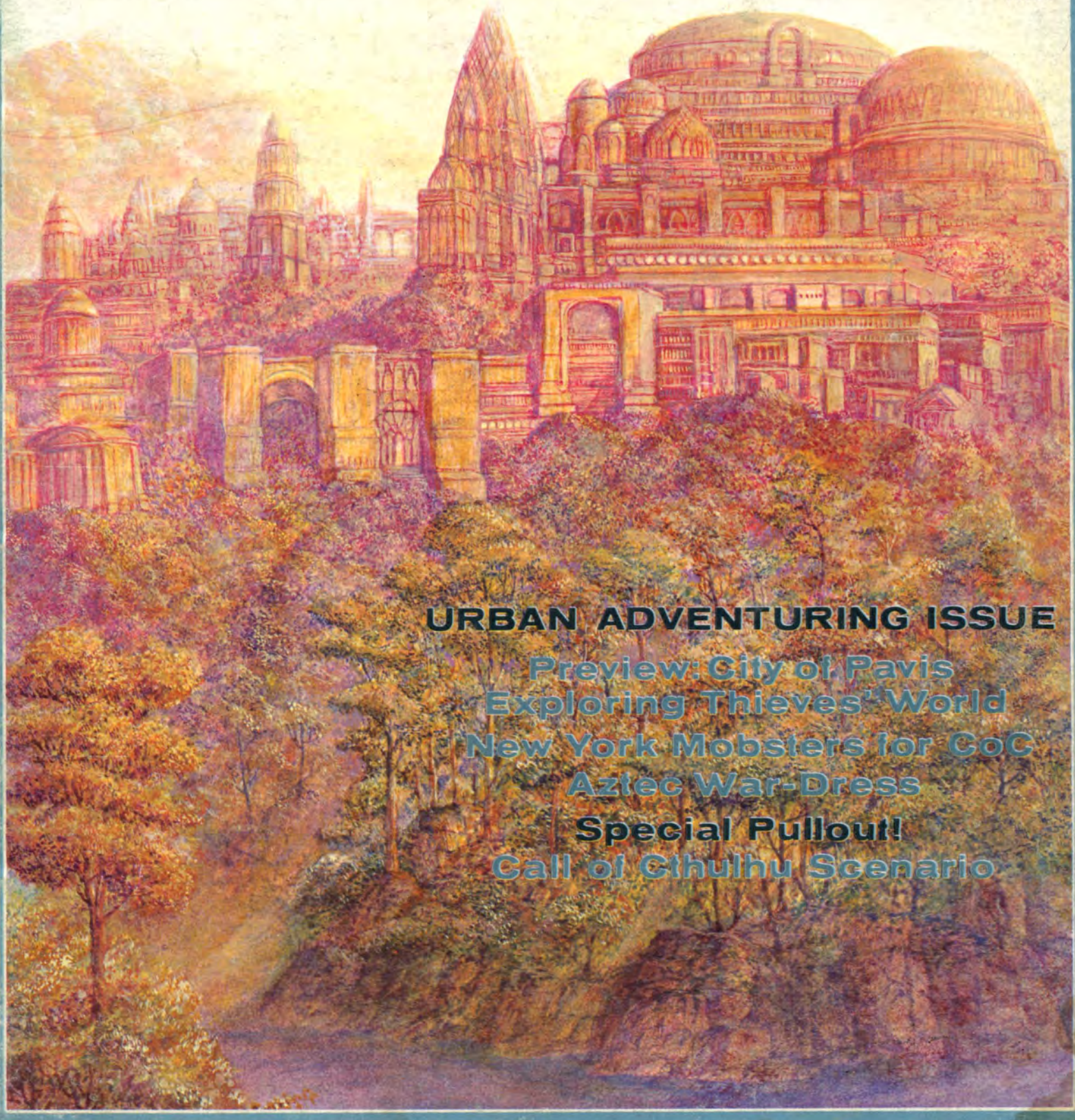

URBAN ADVENTURING ISSUE

Preview: City of Pavis
Exploring Thieves' World
New York Mobsters for CoC
Aztec War-Dress
Special Pullout!
Call of Cthulhu Scenario

DIFFERENT VIEWS

LETTERS COLUMN

A Rebuttal to the Rebuttal

Recently, you published my review of *Ysgarth.* Since then, David F. Nalle, the game's designer, has written a letter to *Different Worlds.* He took a dim view of my article. He felt I had not understood the game's alignment system, combat system and religions.

My opinion of the game has not changed. Its price is very reasonable. The designer has put a great deal of time and effort into his game. I felt learning the game would also require a great deal of time and effort. This is not a simple game.

Reviews are very subjective and no single review is definitive. However, I see nothing wrong in pointing out minor flaws in a game. All games have them. When the designer of a game participates in play sessions, problems are often masked by his skill as a gamemaster. *Ysgarth* is playable but cumbersome. When I think a game is unplayable, I say as much.

The combat system says too little about movement. Movement is important in combat as any *kung fu* movie fan knows. Nalle's system tells you if you hit someone in the right or left eye, but doesn't tell you how to move through a general melee. Combat, like ballet, should be poetry in motion.

The alignment rules are both different from and better than the *D&D* rules. They also impose more work on the gamemaster. I believe human relations cannot be covered by any system of alignment. I much prefer the concept of saliency from *Legacy.* Like *Time's* "Man of the Year," saliency is a measure of the impact of an individual on the world around him.

There are too many gods and pantheons in role-playing games. The clash of just two small pantheons can be both workable and interesting. I refer you to Asprin's *Thieves' World* series as a case in point. If you put too many gods in a game, you are putting temptation in a player's path.

I still object to a sword designed to kill women, children, and the elderly. It may be "evil" but it is also pointless. I can't imagine anyone spending the time and effort to make it.

C. D. Martin
Ontario, Canada

[The review referred to appeared in DW *22, while the rebuttal appeared in issue 25.]*

A Compliment and Suggestion

Some personal observations about issue 25. Overall, I am very impressed with the quality of the artwork and layout. It shows a very high professional standard, and you and your staff should be congratulated.

There is only one weak part of the magazine, and that is the movie review section. Like the issue before, the review was of a movie that has already come and gone, and the tone of the *Beastmaster* review was a surface impression; useless for a movie that played in Charlotte more than two months ago. I would suggest foregoing the review section and replacing it with extended essays about various aspects of fantasy and science-fiction filmmaking (about special effects, the role of women in recent films, trends in depiction of violence and sex and the like). They need not be as dry as I'm making them sound, but they can still draw on recent films and retain their freshness. Failing that, the movie reviews can go more in-depth (as deep as a fantasy film can be) and still cover those same topics.

Bill Peschel
Charlotte, NC

More Review Comments

Congratulations to Bill Hamblin on his splendid review of *Man, Myth, and Magic.* And especial congratulations on the fact that he is the first major reviewer to highlight what must be the most exciting aspect of this FRP game: its concentration on scenarios.

Fantasy role-players (if not always game publishers) have long since discovered that the scenario is the real key to a riveting adventure, while the various role-play systems are little more than the necessary evils which allow us to enter those glorious worlds of the imagination.

This is, I suppose, why *MM&M* has been so well received at every major game convention in the U.S.; and why it is making such striking inroads into the market. There are, one has to admit, far more complicated systems available, but the gaming fraternity is quickly learning that when you want realism, interest, intrigue, and excitement in a scenario, you have to go a long way to top what *MM&M* has to offer.

There is an excellent reason for this. The historical background of the various *MM&M* scenarios has been very thoroughly researched. For example, the map of Stonehenge which forms part of the Apollo's Temple scenario is based on the official British Board of Works plan of this ancient monument. Characters like Setanta, King Conor Mac Nessa, Cu Chullain and the mystical Sidhe race are all drawn from original sources of the ancient mythohistory of Erin. I was surprised that Bill appeared a little grudging in his comment that the Great Pyramid of Egypt was 'fairly accurately described.' In fact, the description was accurate down to the actual measurements of the interior passages, making it the closest a player will ever get to the real thing short of a visit to Giza.

Finally, let me correct a couple of understandable errors which crept into Bill's review. The first was his notion that *MM&M* is set in ancient Rome. In fact, it is set generally in the ancient world, with published or upcoming scenarios set in Hibernia (Ireland), Egypt, England, the Norselands, South America, and even ancient Russia! (In a wilder moment, I actually set one scenario on the planet Venus, basing the environment on everything now known about that world from the NASA space probes.)

As a major civilized center, Rome was chosen as a logical springboard to introduce players to the ancient world as a whole, but the game is by no means confined to Italy; or even to the Roman Empire as a whole.

The second error is even more understandable since the boxed set gives a date of 41 A.D. for the Apollo's Temple adventure. This obviously led Bill to conclude the whole game is set around that time. The key concept of reincarnation, built into the *MM&M* system, permits players to adventure in virtually any time period or geographical location of the ancient world. Once this fact is grasped, the apparent anachronisms of the system are readily resolved.

Herbie Brennan
London, England

[Herbie Brennan is the author of Man, Myth & Magic.]

Valerie Olson

Regarding DW *24, page 12, a beard addition, please accept my apologies. As editor, I still reserve the right to make corrections on accepted material.*

Yurek Chodak
□ *Managing Editor*

PLEASE ADDRESS LETTERS TO: DIFFERENT VIEWS, PO BOX 6302, ALBANY, CA 94706-0302

More Changes

First, I would like to wish all of you a happy new year. Although you will be reading this in March, it is still early January as this is written. I would like to thank all of you for supporting *Different Worlds* in the past year: the subscribers, the magazine-stand buyers, the contributors, the distributors, the store owners, the advertisers, and the wonderful staff at Chaosium.

1982 was a mostly good year for *Different Worlds.* We went to slick paper, added interior color, had several popular theme issues, streamlined the layout, added several new columns, and sold out of two issues.

However the goal of producing twelve quality issues per year has proven too big a load for the limited staff that works on *DW.*

Instead, there will be a total of nine issues this year. The good news is that these issues will be 56 pages long. The bad news is that it is necessary to raise the price of the magazine to $3 to offset the extra printing costs.

Expect this year's issues to come five to six weeks apart. This year we resolve to have each issue out on schedule. Issue 28 will be in stores in mid April; 29 in late May; 30 in mid June; 31 in early August; 32 at the beginning of October; 33 in mid November; and 34 in late December.

Enjoy your reading.

Yurek Chodak

Different Worlds

Issue 27, March 1983

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FRP Town Design Survey
by Ken Rolston

This article surveys the available modules, scenarios, playaids, and magazine articles dealing with fantasy role-playing in towns. A list of excellent books about towns is also provided.

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City of Pavis
by Greg Stafford and Steve Perrin

Pavis is a Chaosium city-scenario pack soon to be published. Pavis has long been a favorite among Gloranthan adventurers.

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The Empty Buildings of Sanctuary
by Anders Swenson

In Sanctuary, the featured town of Robert Asprin's *Thieves' World* series, the largest category of buildings is listed as "empty." This mystery is explored in this article.

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Mob Leaders
by Glenn Rahman

Charles "Lucky" Luciano, Arthur "Dutch Schultz" Flegenheimer, Jack "Legs" Diamond, Louis "Lepke" Buchalter were the kingpins of crime in the prohibition era New York. Now they can meet their punishment at the hands of your *Call of Cthulhu* and *Gangster!* player-characters.

23
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by William Hamblin

Visit Alexandria, Cairo, and Ashmunayn, as you strive to keep the Cthulhu cultists at bay. This is a multi-session, fully-detachable, scenario for *Call of Cthulhu.*

36
Dressed for a Flowery Death
by Ernest Hogan

The Aztec warrior's way of life, weapons, armor, combat, provisions, ranking system, as well as the origins of human sacrifice, are all discussed in this article.

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Artists

Cover — *Dawn of the East,* by Mark Roland.
Interiors — Michael Blum, pages 10, 11; Yurek Chodak, pages 8, 9, 25, 32, 33; Lisa A. Free, pages 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29; Alexis Gilliland, page 54; Ernest Hogan, pages 36, 37, 38, 39.

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City Modules, Scenarios, Play Aids, Books, Magazine Articles

FRP TOWN DESIGN SURVEY

By Ken Rolston

Sooner or later every referee comes to a point in his campaign when he needs a town or a city. He must either design his own from scratch, design one based on various published gaming aids, or adapt and personalize a published package containing a fully prepared town. This article is intended to supply a list of references that a referee will find useful in designing a city, and will offer a brief survey of the better "ready-to-play" cities that have been published.

The first part of this article will focus on the virtues and limitations of several published game aids featuring towns and cities. The second section will discuss gaming aids that may be helpful for those who decide to design their own towns. The third section will direct referees to a charming and inexpensive source for information and illustrations that can be invaluable for designing or personalizing an FRP town. Finally, a brief annotated bibliography of useful articles from fantasy gaming magazines is provided for further reference.

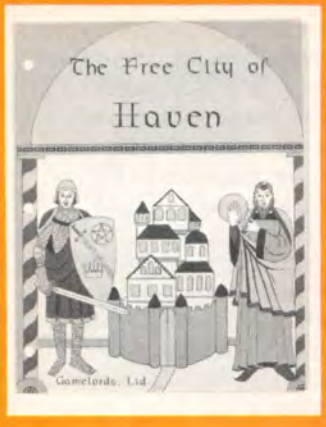
Game Aids Featuring Fully Prepared Towns

The best FRP gaming aid featuring a city is *Thieves' World* (Chaosium, $18). Two design features especially recommend this package. First, the major personalities of the city are described in terms of all the major FRP gaming systems; that is, the character statistics and abilities of each NPC pre-prepared, ready for immediate use with the game system of the referee's choice. Many other fine gaming materials suffer from the time and effort that must be spent in adapting the package to the referee's campaign; when a gamemaster buys a packaged city to save labor in preparing a town, he does not look forward to spending hours adapting the materials to his own game system.

Thieves' World is also based on a series of three short story collections edited by Robert Asprin, where each story has a common setting in the city of Sanctuary. The history, street maps, political situations, gods, magic, economy, and personalities of the main characters of Sanctuary were created in a collaborative effort organized by Asprin and including the contributions of some of the finer science fiction authors, including Joe Haldeman, Gordon Dickson, Andrew Offutt, John Brunner, Poul Anderson, and Philip Jose Farmer. It is little wonder that the quality and detail of the setting is remarkably fine and credible. Further, the stories from the collections may be thought of as inexpensive supplements to the game system; by reading the short stories, the referee can pick up the details of atmosphere and personality that can only be found in superior fiction.

The other distinctive feature of *Thieves' World* is the quality of the game design. Each package contains "The Player's Guide" which details to a player those facts about Sanctuary that would be common knowledge, saving the gamemaster the tedious task of communicating the basic details of the setting to the player-characters. "The Game Master's Guide" contains maps and diagrams, essays on civics and economics, and a detailed encounter table. As a stand-alone addition to a campaign, a resource to improvise on, or as a model of a well-designed FRP city, *Thieves' World* is most useful and impressive.

Another excellent city package is *The Free City of Haven* (Gamelords, $14.95). Though not as well-organized as *Thieves' World,* it is broader in detail and scope. The personalities' characteristics and abilities are defined primarily in terms of *D&D*-style campaigns, which limits its applicability for some campaigns. On the other hand, the personalities of the characters themselves and their social and political ties are carefully outlined, and numerous dramatic situations are inherent in the interaction of the NPCs. *Haven* is designed for a referee who enjoys elaborate role-playing and complex narratives, and provides an imaginative and credible setting for the scenarios suggested by the materials.

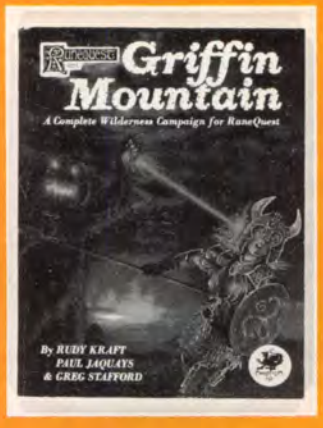


The city is divided into eight sections, and for each section the following features are described: background material [description of area, politics, prominent families and NPCs, guard and patrol information, etc.] ; notes for the GM; personalities; more detailed shop and residence descriptions [many with floor plans] ; capsule descriptions of additional public and private buildings; and suggested scenarios.

Both the primary virtue and fault of *Haven* is the overwhelming volume of the package. The problems of organizing such a bulk of information are not completely resolved. However, the variety and detail of the materials will prove a valuable resource for the referee looking for strong characterization and motivation as well as the layout and specifics of a large city.

Two other large city packages are *The City State of the Invincible Overlord* ($9) and *The City State of the World Emperor* ($12), both published by Judges Guild. These game aids offer a wealth of detail for a pittance, but they are rather less organized than either of the two aids discussed above, and they are less concerned with personalities, culture, and atmosphere than with sheer numbers of shops and NPCs, with each being only briefly described. When they were originally released, they were the best cities available, and they are still impressive simply in terms of size and variety, but they are specifically prepared for *D&D* and, like most *D&D* material, they have no coherent sense of politics, culture, or economics. However, a referee who uses *D&D* systems and is uninterested in political intrigue or detailed role-playing, or who wishes to provide his own politics and personalities, may find either of these packages quite satisfactory.

Two other game supplements published by Chaosium are of interest to a referee looking to work on a smaller town. *Griffin Mountain* contains three citadels which are associated with small towns (800-1700 people), and includes maps and more-or-less detailed keys for the most important buildings, along with some NPCs with personalities and *RuneQuest* statistics and abilities. Though not so well-developed and organized as *Thieves' World*, and on a much smaller scale, the towns in this campaign can certainly be used as good models for smaller population centers and are particularly useful to *RuneQuest* judges.

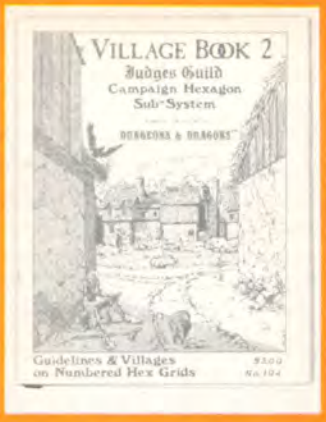


Finally, I ought to mention *Trollpak*, also by Chaosium, which contains an example of a town constructed and inhabited by a non-human race. The Skyfall Lake scenario is only a small section of the package, and it is limited in detail, but it contains a charming grog shop and some appealing non-human NPCs. It serves as a reminder that not all FRP towns should be designed and organized on the human model. I look forward to seeing more detailed renderings of towns created and populated by non-human races.

Gaming Aids for Designing Your Own Towns

Judges Guild has a number of valuable and inexpensive material that will save time and labor for a referee who wishes to design his own town. My favorite, though horribly disorganized and primitive in comparison to more recent publications, is the *Ready Reference Sheets* ($2.75). This was the first city gaming aid I bought, and I admit to a sentimental attraction to it that may cloud my critical judgment. It is essentially a set of tables for rolling up random characters, terrain features, encounters, etc., but it has a very useful system for crime, trial, and punishment, a necessary feature in any city, and a light-hearted system for "Offensive Locution" (divided into two major attack modes: reparte and witticism). It also has a random chart for NPC cutups – social miscues designed to embarrass the player-characters, such as gripping, nibbling, or dribbling on another potentially hostile NPC. This aid is full of interesting detail, organized in a chaotic manner and often inadequately explained, but it is cheap and entertaining, and valuable as a source of ideas even if it is not specifically usable in most gaming situations.

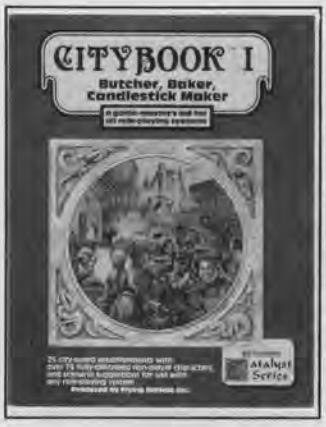
More immediately useful are the following books: *Village Books I & II* and *Castle Books I & II*, published by Judges Guild ($2.75 for book I and $3 for book II). These provide many detailed maps of small to intermediate towns and hamlets, using the Judges Guild Campaign Hex System to provide a numerical reference for each hex on the map, making the task of keying the individual features on the map far less frustrating. The towns themselves are varied in size, organization, and topography, including river, mountain, and harbor sites, among others. The maps are nicely visualized, the scale is consistent, though no key to the scale is given anywhere in the book. Each book also contains more of the Judges Guild-style random tables for all sorts of things – lists of shops, town names, wall thickness and type, and so on – that I have actually found useful from time to time. The *Castles* books are primarily castle plans, but often small villages are detailed around or inside the walls of the castle. These books deliver the referee from the most time-consuming and laborious task in preparing the city: it is rough to draw nice-looking maps that make sense, and the problem of scale and matching the scale to movement units is very difficult without the use of hex paper. Using these books in conjunction with another game aid, Midkemia Press's *Cities* book, is particularly effective; the *Cities* book helps the referee fill out the maps with businesses and residences, leaving the referee only the task of detailing the NPCs.



Cities (Midkemia Press, $8) is a fairly new and very helpful resource for filling a city with markets, shops, businesses, services, residences, and public buildings. There are two sets of charts for populating either villages or cities with the appropriate buildings (businesses, etc) for the number of people in the population center. There is also a system for determining what types of booths are offered at market on a particular day a good idea since markets are such perfect places for

player encounters, and since the atmosphere and character of a market is largely dependent on what is sold there. Larger towns are described as divided into upper, middle, and lower class areas,along with red-light districts and shantytowns. The business charts are comprehensive and intelligently organized, resulting in a credible distribution of residences and shops. In addition to these useful charts and systems for populating cities, *Cities* also contains excellent encounter tables, covering a broad range of circumstances and full of dramatic situations for impromptu adventures. *Cities* also has an interesting section on character catch-up, designed to provide the transitions between adventures for the character living in town, handling employment, investments, living in poverty, marriage proposals, and other features of daily life between hacking quests. The personality of most player-characters is formed in response to adventuring situations, often full of violence and action; using this system should encourage a more rounded impression of a character as he responds to the mundane challenges of finding employment and living within his means.

Another resource for city designers is *Citybook I* (Flying Buffalo, $14.95). This book contains twenty-five establishments that might be found in a larger town or city, each with notes on NPCs, very detailed floor plans, (including locations of barrels, candleholders, curtains, and so on), and suggestions for scenarios using the establishments and NPCs. The book uses Flying Buffalo's own approach to the generic game aid. For example, *Thieves' World* provides the stats and abilities for each NPC in terms of all the major FRP rules systems. The referee, however, is usually only interested in the one set of stats that relates to the system he uses; it is not surprising that he may begrudge paying for the inclusion of the translations into other rules systems. *Citybook I*, on the other hand, provides a general rating (poor, average, fair, good, very good, excellent) for the fighting and magical abilities of the NPCs and of the quality of the locks encountered, and leaves the referee to translate these ratings into their own game terms.



Citybook I specializes in colorful and dramatic settings and personalities, combined with excellent artwork, including expressive portraits of the NPCs and marvelously rendered diagrams and floorplans. *Citybook I* also has a lighthearted style typical of Flying Buffalo products, contrasting sharply with the generally more grim aspects of the other city materials mentioned in this article. No other city gaming aid has such detail and flavor in its descriptions of specific establishments; it serves as an admirable model for a designer's own more important businesses and dwellings, as well as providing numerous emporiums and abodes that may be readily introduced to the referee's own existing town.

An Unanticipated Treasure: Juvenile Non-Fiction

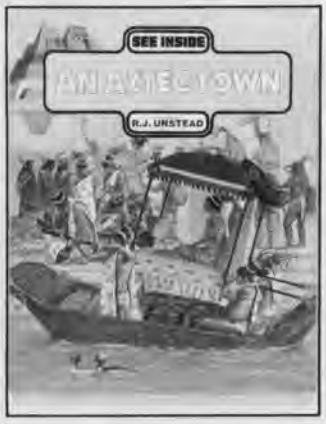
One of the major problems of the materials discussed in the two preceding sections is that they cost money. The third resource here is free for the asking, and readily available. A simple trip to the local public library will give you access to one of the finest resources for developing an FRP city – juvenile non-fiction. Numerous excellent books have been published on the towns and cultures of the Middle Ages in Europe, and you may even come across books covering more exotic cultures, such as Ancient China or South America. These books can be found in the J940 section of your library, with books more specific to a given culture in other parts of the J900's. "J" stands for "juvenile" – kid books – but they are useful for a number of reasons.

First, these books tend to be lavishly illustrated, often in color with lots of maps, diagrams, and cutaways. In preparing your FRP town, a picture is worth a thousand words, because sooner or later you will be called upon to visualize your city for your players, through maps, floorplans, and diagrams. Visual information is so much easier to understand and recall; sadly, it seems that for grownups to learn this way is socially unacceptable. You may easily use these books as supplementary aids for your players; just turn to the picture of the town square when they ask you what they see.

These references can be read or scanned in a few minutes. You don't want to spend your time preparing a term paper on ancient towns; you want something with a minimum of time and labor.

Another virtue of these books is that they help an adult to recall and summarize the fragments of his education. You may vaguely recall all sorts of historical scraps about Medieval Europe, but no more be able to apply that knowledge than you can recall enough geometry to tile your bathroom. But in these books, there is no cloud of obscuring facts. Nice pictures in the nice book. See?

Trot down to your local library and look at a few of these. Ignore the gah-gah looks of the librarian. Find a tiny chair and a tiny table and browse to your heart's content. Most particularly, I recommend the incredible *See Inside* series. The series editor is R. J. Unstead. The titles include: *See Inside a Roman Town, See Inside an Aztec Town, See Inside an Egyptian Town, See Inside an Ancient Greek Town,* and *See Inside an Ancient Chinese Town.* If I may digress briefly, note that none of these are Medieval Europe towns. Why is it that almost every FRP city game aid presupposes a Medieval European origin? This seems to me to be rather leaden-footed fantasy; many of the other, more exotic cultures have an appealing alien aura that is perfect for FRP gaming.



These *See Inside* books are delightful. The typical format gives an artist's aerial view of a historic city, accurately rendered as closely as possible with reference to current scholarship. Then we have larger scale artwork depicting public and private residences, with cutaways to reveal interior detail, and text describing typical activities of the inhabitants. Shops, taverns, town defenses, temples, homes of the rich and the poor are often represented graphically, with accompanying text.

Another fine resource is a book called *The Buildings of Ancient Greece* by Helen and Richard Leacroft. This has many diagrams and drawings of buildings, explaining how they were constructed (critical knowledge for those gamemasters whose players like to tear things down) and how each room fit into the life style of the ancient Greek. You never get a really good look into the bathroom, though. Its strange that one of the things players always want to know is how the sanitary facilities work. The liner notes say that the Leacrofts are working on a new book, *The Buildings of Ancient Britain,* which I'm going to look up as soon as I can.

Here are a few more specific titles: *Town Life in the Middle Ages, Country Life in the Middle Ages,* and *Growing up in the Middle Ages,* all by Penelope Davies.

Living in a Medieval Village by R. J. Unstead (gritty and lower-class, full of nice peasant fun like poaching and football).

Growing up in Ancient Rome by Amanda Purves.

The Middle Ages: Church, State, and Society by Alan Clifford (a little more cerebral, with a unique section in the back consisting of twenty brief extracts from contemporary documents, covering things like the Black Death, a charter of federation among towns, and privileges given to a fisherman's guild).

I do not mean to suggest that there are no good books for adults on towns in the Middle Ages. There are, in fact, many interesting books, but they either tend to rely almost wholly on text with sparse and unimaginative illustrations, or they are exotic and rare books possessed only by larger libraries. For example, there is a wonderful book, *Historic Towns,* edited by M. D. Lobel, that has maps of towns of the British Isles from very early times up to the 1800's. I found this book by chance in the New York Public Library; it is not the sort of thing you'd expect in a local library. Don't be intimidated; play around with the card catalog and perhaps you'll find just the reference you're looking for. The key concept is simple; for free, you can afford to look.

Annotated Bibliography of Articles on Town Design for Fantasy Role-Playing

The following list makes no pretense to being complete; a truly comprehensive search of all the important APA's and secondary professional FRP magazines would have been difficult. At times, the relevance of the article to town design is only peripheral; these articles are listed because I think them useful in developing cities and their backgrounds.

Adventure Gaming

Oct. 81, No. 4: "How Much is that Bearskin in the Window?" (An article on economics, an important detail in designing any city with businesses. It has a list of common items with costs in Ancient Roman and US currency. It helps a gamemaster figure out what might be sold in his city and for how much.)

Dec. 81, No. 6: "Stranded on Arden" (A *Traveller* adventure which is interesting for its treatment of adventurers in conflict with a bureaucracy; details of bribes and labyrinthine layers and threads of authority are given.)

Feb. 82, No. 8: "Developing a Playable City Campaign" (Contains practical advice and notes on the major FRP city gaming aids.)

White Dwarf

Feb/Mar 79, No. 11: *"D&D* Barroom Brawl" (A good model for urban entertainment; lots of fun to play and ref.)

Feb/Mar 82, No. 29: "Designing a Quasi-Medieval Society for *D&D:* Part 1; The Economy – Workers and Craftsmen" (This is the first in a series. It is the best material available for *D&D* cities. Using the *Dungeonmaster's Guide* as the basic source of "facts," the author extrapolates to as reasonable a system as possible, given the assumptions.)

Feb/Mar 82, No. 29: "Lucky Eddi" (A cute bit of fiction in the style of Damon Runyon, set in Pavis, a *RuneQuest* city. It gives a good lowlife sense of atmosphere.)

Apr/May 82, No, 30: "Designing a Quasi-Medieval Society: The Economy; Mercenaries and Resource Owners" (A remarkable attempt to deduce a society *ex post facto* from clues in the *AD&D Dungeonmaster's Guide*. It discusses mercenaries, merchants, farmers, inn and tavern keepers, building construction, and NPC incomes.)

June/July 82, No. 31: "The Town Planner: Part 1; Designing and Running Villages" (Contains notes on village background, siting, and social setting; monsters and villages; village features; village population; local events and calendars; typical encounters.)

Dragon

July 77, No. 8: "The Development of Towns in *D&D*" (Suggestions for layout, populating, occupations, and goods and services available. Reprinted in *Best of the Dragon.*)

Sept 79, No. 29: "Inns and Taverns" (General and undistinguished.)

May 80, No. 37: "Step by Step System for Urban Encounters" (Clever, original, fast, and simple.)

May 80, No. 37: "Cities Can Help Make Characters More Real" (General and unremarkable.)

Oct 81, No. 54: "Ruins: rotted and Risky – But Rewarding" (An article on abandoned or decaying population centers. Approaches the problem of city building from a unique perspective – backwards. Recommended.)

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Different Worlds

Sept 81, No. 14: "Taverns and Inns" (Limited detail. Charts to dice on.)

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Jan 82, No. 18: "How to Design Cities" (General agenda faced by referees needing to design cities or towns.)

Jan 82, No. 18: "The Tale of the Jolly Soldier" (A *RuneQuest* scenario using a city setting and illustrating the impact of unfamiliar city laws and customs on visiting adventurers.)

Sorcerer's Apprentice

Summer 81, No. 11: "The Black Dragon Tavern" (A *T&T* scenario illustrating the setup of a tavern for gaming, with floorplan, NPCs, and typical tavern activities.)

Fall 81, No. 12: "City Building and Citymastering" (This was reprinted in *Citybook I.* It is a general introduction to city FRP.)

Spring 82, No. 14: "The Emerald Dome" (A sample of the materials from *Citybook I.* It has excellent detail and characterization for a single city establishment.) □

An Introduction to the City of . . .

by Greg Stafford and Steve Perrin

RUNEQUEST®

PAVIS

THRESHOLD TO DANGER

This article is a preview of *Pavis,* a Chaosium city scenario pack soon to be published. Pavis has long been a favorite among Gloranthan adventurers. The first excerpt is Gimpy's, a popular tavern, the second piece is a condensed chronology of the city.

GIMPY'S

The tavern called Gimpy's was founded some five years before the Lunar invasion, when three adventurers were brought out of the Rubble by their comrades. Each had lost part of a leg but the party as a whole was rich.

The three amputees found no one to use powerful magic to restore their limbs, so they retired from the adventurous life and bought a tavern from its previous owner (who had called it "The Temple," so customers could tell their wives that they had been "down to the temple" when they finally staggered home).

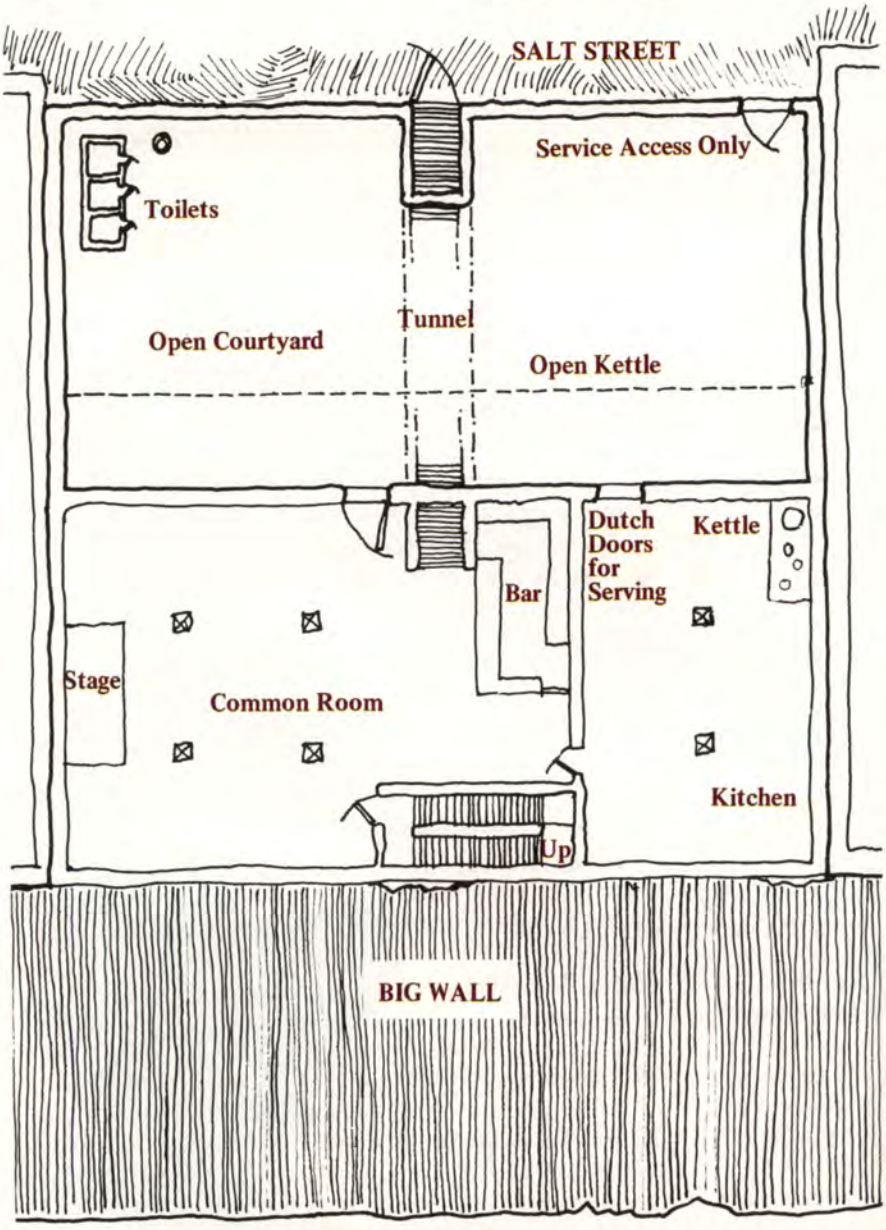
The three new owners attempted to maintain the old name, but their customers found their similar problems so amusing that Gimpy's became the name of choice. Even the owners agreed: they took down the signboard of the Pavis temple and put up one showing a peg leg instead.

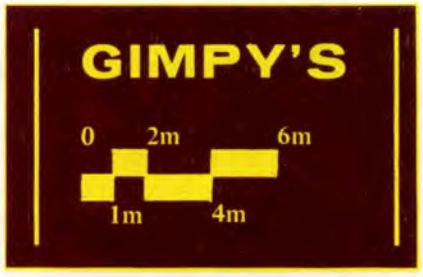
The three former adventurers are still the proprietors of Gimpy's and at least one will be found in the common room when customers are there. The three proprietors are Morey the Short, and the brothers Parzel and Miltry Post.

Clientele

Gimpy's is an adventurers' tavern, attracting every sort willing to set old grudges aside for a few hours. For instance, one might see Yelornan shield maidens and Zorak Zoran berserks in the common room at the same time, albeit at opposite ends.

Griselda and Wolfshead were seen at Gimpy's before their latest escapade, and Krogar Wolfhelm, an Orlanthi who teaches swordplay at the Humakt temple, maintains a room upstairs. Lunars such as Derenx the Handsome and Jorjar the Quick come occasionally, usually when it is known that a particularly favored entertainment, such as the Minstrels Three or the Blonde Piper, is performing.





The conversation is of adventuring, and the owners encourage such talk with tales of their own adventures on Temple Hill. Many adventuring bands recruit from the common room, and many adventurers looking for a place in a warband come here for exposure. Fights are common but not encouraged, and general brawls are forbidden. The occasional petty fight, such as the one where Ruric Runespear is said to have gotten his first taste of blood, are less common with the now somewhat higher class of customer, but they are not unknown.

Layout

To get to Gimpy's from Salt street, one must enter the archway on Salt street with the pegleg sign over it and descend a flight of stairs into a tunnel which continues toward the Great Wall for about ten meters, then ascends again. At the top of the stairs is the common room of Gimpy's, which generally has a population of a dozen adventurers and a couple of serving girls, plus at least one of the owners.

This entrance is in the wall facing Salt street. Opposite the entrance is the east wall of the tavern, which is itself built up against the great wall. Between the entrance-side wall and Salt street is a courtyard, which can be reached only by going through Gimpy's or by climbing over the Salt street wall. In the courtyard are benches and tables, and it is used as the eatery known as the Open Kettle. There is always a rich stew available for a nominal sum.

Rumor has it that the stew comes from a magical artifact the owners and their friends took out of Temple Hill, but the proprietors do not say.

The ground floor consists of a common room and a side kitchen from whence comes the stew for the Open Kettle.

Upstairs the three owners each have a room, and one is leased to Krogar Wolfhelm. Four other rooms, each with its own chamber pot, are for rent. Usually at least two of these rooms are occupied.

Gimpy's basement is known for two things. First, its wine cellar and beer kegs are filled with good, if not exotic, wine and beer which is sold at reasonable prices.

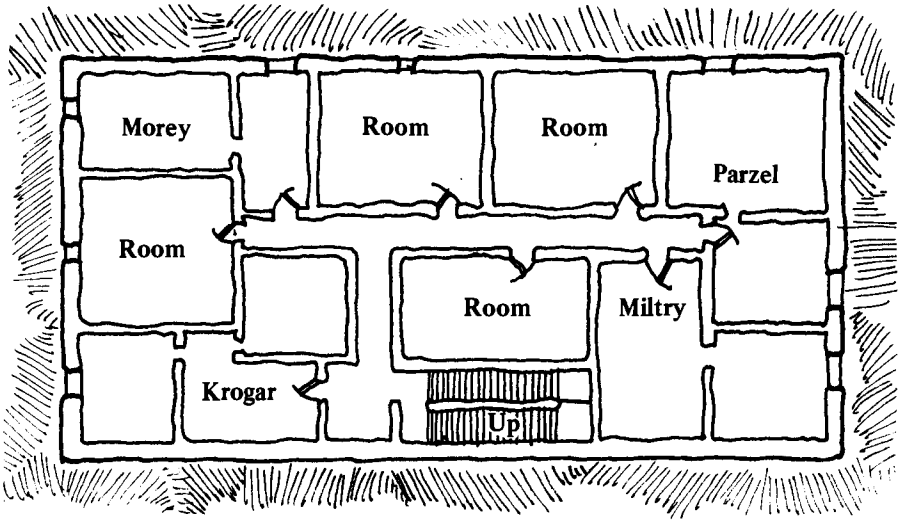
The other claim to fame for Gimpy's basement is the tunnel which runs under the great wall into the Rubble itself. The end of the tunnel opens up to the south of the zebra pens, and watchers there keep an eye on it, having been paid to do so by the owners of Gimpy's. These watchers are also regular guards for that side of the zebra pens. In the basement annex, four adventurers are always on guard, encouraged by a generous stipend from the management, and fortified by all the beer and stew they can consume while off duty.

First-time adventurers are usually disappointed to find that one of the four guards is also in the employ of the Lunar empire, and is in charge of filling out the Lunar forms necessary for an expedition into the Rubble. The Lunar forces are well-aware of the tunnel, and of a couple of others like it elsewhere, and they guard them just as they do the Peoples Gate and the gate through the Pavis temple. The zebra clan guards on the other side of the wall will let adventurers back into the tunnel for a small charge.

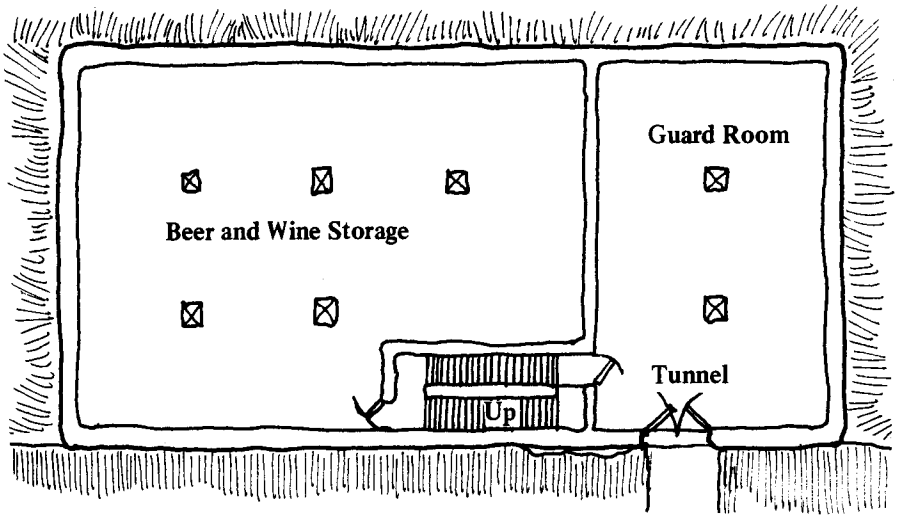
There are rumors of sub-basements beneath Gimpy's, with secret meeting rooms and yet another, unofficial, tunnel big enough to pass horses through, but this is unlikely: how would one bring the horses into Gimpy's up and down all those stairs?

Noted Residents and Customers

The place attracts noted individuals. Both Fleeter Nemm and Bendrath of the Pavis temple come by often; the weapon master known as Garrath Sharpsword is a regular. Shalmar goes there looking for students, and Filbar



UPSTAIRS



BASEMENT

plans by Yurek Chodak

has a regular table which he insists on having when he comes. Backhus the Wolf drops by.

Of the town council, Kalf Haldelsson is a regular, as is Derenx the Handsome. Kolli the Portly appears when he wants to talk and yarn with his old comrade, Parzel – one of the inn's owners.

The clientele is not the most powerful in New Pavis. People like Byrgga, Benderri, Sor-Eel, or Jotaran have higher-class places to attend. But riffraff and known criminals are kept out, and the food and drink, while reasonably priced, is not given out on credit, so that the poorest members of the community are excluded.

There is no restriction as to race; trolls and dwarfs are welcome, as is the occasional elf. This has led to some confrontations, but the owners are adamant in their policy, and Krogar is sufficient to keep the peace. Racial, political, or social differences occasionally erupt into duels, but the principal atmosphere at Gimpy's is good-natured revelry, with islands of quiet talk and contemplation.

A PAVIS CHRONOLOGY

Selected events from the history of the city of Pavis.

720(?) – Jrusteli/God Learners establish trading settlement at mouth of the River of Cradles, called Feroda.

780(?) – Robcradle founded by Thanrax the Fair in alliance with the Horse People. Several giants' cradles captured here over the next few years.

800 – Paragua the giant destroys Robcradle with assistance of Waha. Paragua and Waha then erect the gigantic walls for their own future defense.

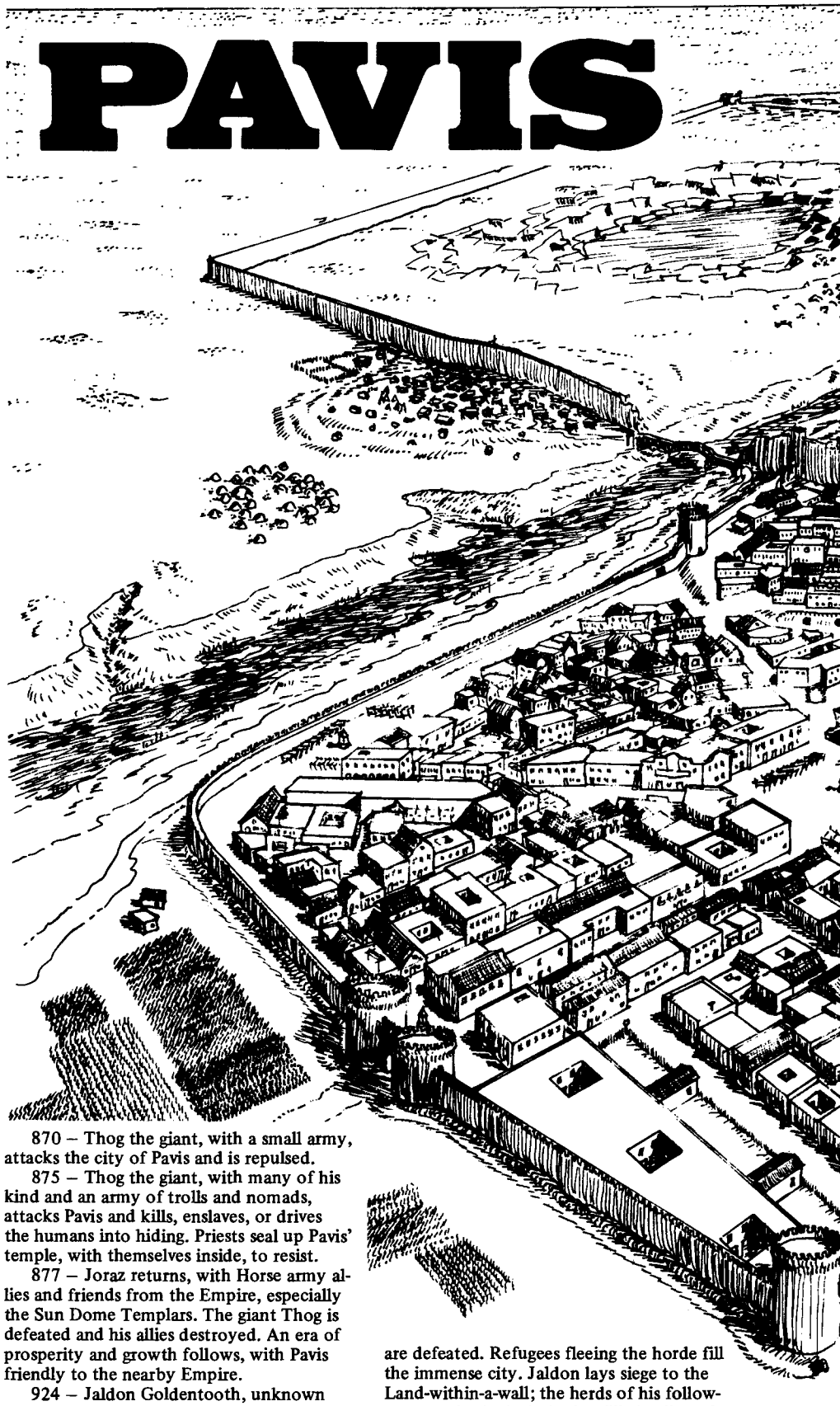
809 – Waha the Butcher, with assistance from some giants, sacks Adari. Settlers scatter, including the child Pavis, who goes to the Empire of the Wyrm's Friends.

830 – Lord Pavis completes his studies and preparations and makes his way to the legendary Faceless Statue of Stone in Shadows Dance and animates it. With allies, Pavis attacks the barbarians at Paragua's Walls while the statue engages the giants. This is called the Too Tall Battle. Paragua is killed, Waha is incurably wounded by the statue, the barbarians flee, and Pavis is victorious.

850 – Lord Pavis declares the city finished enough for his immediate approval. He hopes other people can do their best, too, and dismisses the dwarf builders from his employment. The portion completed up to this time is later called the Real City.

860 – Pavis calls his family, friends, and people together for one final lesson, then retires to a private and secret chamber inside his temple where he still resides. Joraz Kyrem is named lord of the city.

PAVIS



870 – Thog the giant, with a small army, attacks the city of Pavis and is repulsed.

875 – Thog the giant, with many of his kind and an army of trolls and nomads, attacks Pavis and kills, enslaves, or drives the humans into hiding. Priests seal up Pavis' temple, with themselves inside, to resist.

877 – Joraz returns, with Horse army allies and friends from the Empire, especially the Sun Dome Templars. The giant Thog is defeated and his allies destroyed. An era of prosperity and growth follows, with Pavis friendly to the nearby Empire.

924 – Jaldon Goldentooth, unknown before this, leads a motley band of barbarians in an attack on Pavis. They are driven away.

927 – Jaldon Goldentooth leads a huge army of nomads against the city of Pavis. The defenders meet them in the field and are defeated. Refugees fleeing the horde fill the immense city. Jaldon lays siege to the Land-within-a-wall; the herds of his followers graze in the lush, barley-filled valley of Zola Fel.

940 – Jaldon uses his secret magic to eat a great hole in the walls of Pavis, collapsing a part. His army rushes in to plunder the city, though much is undestroyed.

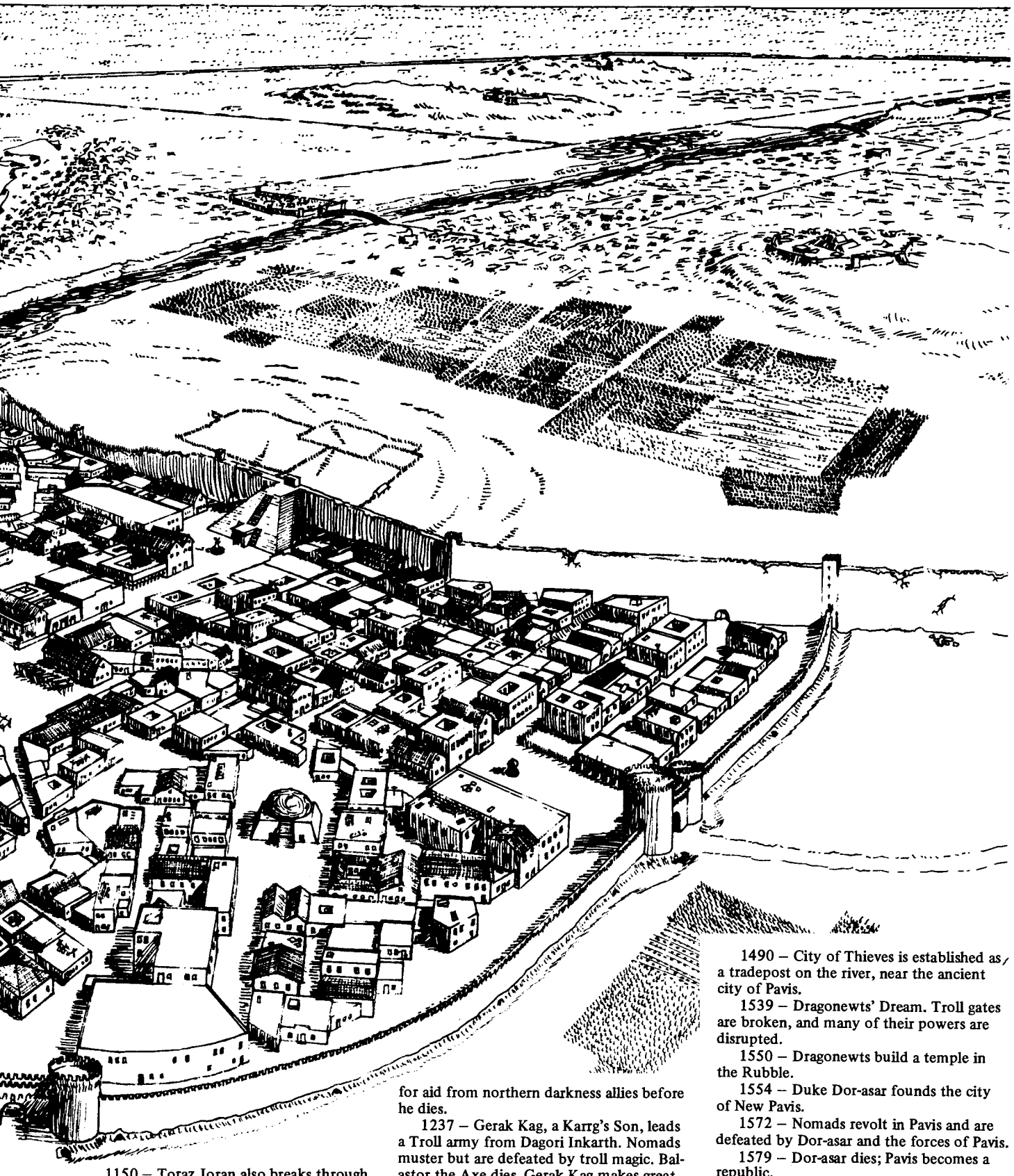


illustration by Michael Blum

1150 – Toraz Joran also breaks through the walls of Pavis and his army destroys more structures. . .

1195 – Toraz Joran slays many leaders in another invasion, and cracks the crystal bricks of Pavis' temple before being driven off by Balastor the Axe. Jokat Pulos sends for aid from northern darkness allies before he dies.

1237 – Gerak Kag, a Karrg's Son, leads a Troll army from Dagori Inkarth. Nomads muster but are defeated by troll magic. Balastor the Axe dies. Gerak Kag makes great spells and protects all his followers within the walls, trying to seal out humans. Troll dominance within the walls begins.

1270 – Unnamed hero killed by trolls in the city. Major nomad interest in the place ends.

1490 – City of Thieves is established as a tradepost on the river, near the ancient city of Pavis.

1539 – Dragonewts' Dream. Troll gates are broken, and many of their powers are disrupted.

1550 – Dragonewts build a temple in the Rubble.

1554 – Duke Dor-asar founds the city of New Pavis.

1572 – Nomads revolt in Pavis and are defeated by Dor-asar and the forces of Pavis.

1579 – Dor-asar dies; Pavis becomes a republic.

1602 – The kingdom of Sartar falls to the Lunar Empire.

1610 – Lunar army invades Prax, defeats a nomad army, and captures Pavis.

1617-1620 – approximate date of the present campaign. □

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The Origins Awards, presented at Origins each year, are an international, popular series of awards aimed at recognizing outstanding achievements in Adventure Gaming. They comprise the Charles Roberts Awards for Boardgaming, and the H.G. Wells Awards for Miniatures and Role-Playing Games. An international Awards Committee of 25 hobbyists (some professionals, but primarily independents) directs and administers the awards system. The nomination ballot is open to all interested gamers. YOUR VOTE can make a real difference! A final ballot is prepared by the committee and voted on by members of the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts & Design. Academy membership, $2/year, is open to active, accomplished hobbyists, both pro and amateur. Membership guidelines are available for a SASE from the addresses given below. Correspondence should be sent to the USA address. Present members may renew by sending their check with this ballot. Canadians may send $2 Canadian, payable to Mike Girard. UK and European members may send 1 pound sterling payable to Ian Livingstone. US and all others may send US $2 payable to Bill Somers.

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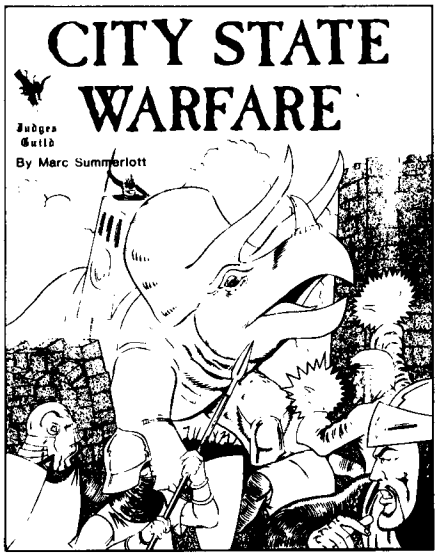

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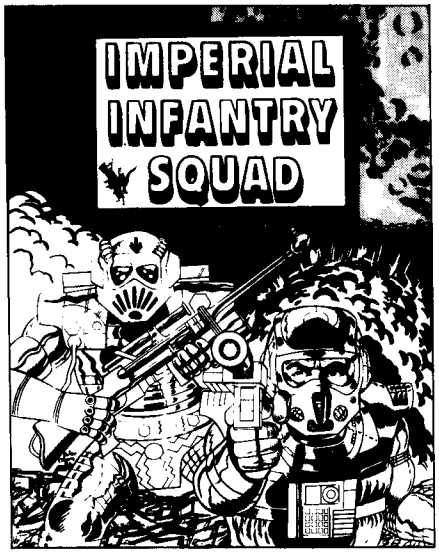

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The "Empty" Buildings of SANCTUARY

by Anders Swenson

When I recently bought a copy of the *Thieves' World* role-playing module, published by Chaosium, I quickly proceeded to key the hundreds of buildings in the town of Sanctuary by using the appropriate tables. I noticed that the largest single category of building among the wide variety of types is the empty, unoccupied structure. In this article an explanation is put forward for this unusual condition.

The first clue to the mystery came from a statement that the buildings in the Maze might not all be the empty shells as indicated, but rather that they were merely "officially" empty, and might actually be in use. This must also be the case with empty buildings in other parts of town.

The most usual reason for a building to be vacant is that it is physically unsafe. This condition could arise from fire, earthquake, explosion, settling foundations, or severe dry rot. The termite has also been known to be a factor in this sort of condition. In our world building inspectors seal up the doors of buildings that are about to collapse. In Sanctuary, I imagine that it would take the loss of a few walls and floors, and maybe the roof to cause this condition. After that the structure would have to be rebuilt from the foundations up.

The next most likely reason for a building to be empty is that it is simply between occupants. Either the building is a residence whose family is out of town, or it is changing owners and perhaps in escrow. Possibly the last tenants left without notice. Usually in this case the vacancy is temporary, and often there is a watchman on duty.

Many of the seemingly empty structures are probably being used by businesses in other locations. Maybe they are using the place for storage; or conducting quazi-legal business with a few bribes for the census takers.Watchmen would be guarding the premises in both cases.

Some "empty" buildings probably look empty on the outside, but have surprise occupants on the inside, probably behind boarded-up windows. These could be fugitives, either from the Rankan government, criminals like Jubal, or the S'danzo seers. Also the building may be a storage house for stolen goods or contraband. The building may actually house a bootleg still, or a Krrf factory. A gang may have appropriated the building to make a hideout. Finally, the empty building may contain an armory for purposes ranging from piracy or banditry, to the overthrow of the Rankan Empire itself. These last activities would occur in buildings which are considered unfit for habitation, or which somehow have been overlooked by their proper owners, or are secretly owned by a rich member of the sanctuary underworld.

A small table is provided below to find the possible use of the "officially" empty buildings:

EMPTY BUILDINGS TABLE

Area of Town – Roll D100 for each building.

Reason	*Jewelers'*	*Processional*	*Westside*	*Red Lanterns*	*Bazaar*	*Downtown*
Uninhabitable	01-29	01-29	01-19	01-09	01-49*	01-59
Storage/Factories	30-79	30-69	20-59	10-59	50-69	60-69
Really Empty	80-89	70-89	60-69	60-65	70-79	70-74
Occupied by Illegal Activities:						
Fugitives	90	90-91	70-79	66-69	nil	75-79
Stolen Goods	91	92-96	80-85	70-75	80-84	80-84
Bootleggers	92-96	97-98	86-89	76-89	85-95	85-89
Gang Hideout	97-99	99	90-95	90-97	96-99	90-94
Secret Armory	00	00	96-00	98-00	00	95-00

* In my campaign, most of the tents in the Bazaar are semi permanent structures, because there would be too much of a traffic jam in the morning if everyone had to set up every day. A booth could be collapsed or burnt down in place. □

Mob Leaders

Antagonists for the *Gangster!* and *Call of Cthulhu* role-playing games

by Glenn Rahman

Left, Charles "Lucky" Luciano at the 1947 Havana hearing which resulted in his second banishment to Italy. He had slipped back after his deportation. Right, Luciano celebrates with a bottle of imported beer on the terrace of his Rome apartment last July 15 after Italian police cleared him of complicity in an international dope ring.

It was not Prohibition which gave rise to the mobs of the big cities. A generation earlier, unions and employers started hiring organized gangs of thugs to fight their battles. The organization and bankrolls these young mobs acquired allowed them to get into other rackets, such as drug-dealing and extortion. When Prohibition was passed, the mobsters saw their oppurtunity.

The mobs of Prohibition set the pattern for organized crime which is still with us today. The main difference is that today La Cosa Nostra [the Mafia] is supreme in America; in the early days any rough and ruthless leader could start his own mob.

A typical mob consists of a boss with varying degrees of absolute power, a few trusted lieutenants to help him plan and organize, and many musclemen, called "soldiers", who actually perform the arson, maiming and murder.

A mob exists to earn money by selling illegal products, providing illegal services, and extorting funds from the enterprises of others. Except for the menace of rival mobsters, organized crime is a secure business, preying on the helpless while paying off the powerful (police, politicians, judges).

Given below are the statistics and career descriptions of four important mob leaders of the Prohibition era, written up for Fantasy Games Unlimited's role-playing game *Gangster!* and Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu*. In play one should remember that a rigid underworld code prevents captured mobsters from giving evidence to police, even against mortal enemies. There is only a 1% chance that a member of organized crime will talk, and then only under extreme pressure (preferably not from police brutality, which usually was not effective against these types). Ordinary victims of organized crime tend to be too terrified to testify (no more than a 5% chance that they will go to a grand jury). Any cooperative witness is marked for death by mob killers, whose success rate is very high – usually above 75%.

CHARLES "LUCKY" LUCIANO 1897 – 1962

for *Gangster!*

Intelligence: 18	Loyalty: 10
Dexterity: 11	Agility: 10
Strength: 9	Luck/Intuition: 6
Personality: 18	Streetwise: Level 2

for *Call of Cthulhu*

STR 9 DEX 11 INT 18 CON 13 CHA 18
POW 14 SIZ 8 SAN 85 EDU 7

SKILLS: Fast Talk 85%; Credit Rating 65%; Drive Auto 40%; Listen 75%; Spot Hidden Item 40%; Law 20%; Submachine Gun 20%; Revolver 60%; Baseball Bat 50%; Small Knife 45%.

For much of what organized crime is today, we can thank Charles "Lucky" Luciano. He found New York racketeering at war with itself or steeped in the plodding traditons of Old World crime societies. He left behind a nation-wide Syndicate, preying upon every level of a society which has not successfully dealt with it to this day.

He was born Salvatore Lucania in the poverty-ridden Sicilian hamlet of Lercera Friddi. His family arrived in New York in 1907 and young Salvatore embarked upon an exuberant career of petty theft and extortion. He was frequently arrested, but never held until 1915, when he drew a year's sentence for carrying narcotics. He served just six months and was so uncooperative with the law that his suppliers, the Five Points Gang, inducted him as a member in good standing.

For the next few years the police suspected him of performing many beatings and murders for the Five Pointers. He free-lanced for "Little Augie" Orgen's multi-ethnic gang of labor-racketeers up to 1920. During these years his knack for keeping the law off his back and his skill at craps earned him the nickname of "Lucky."

"Lucky" left the Five Pointers after 1920 and attached himself to an old-style Mafioso, "Joe the Boss" Masseria. His duties included liquor distribution,

Photos courtesy of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

pimping, and peddling dope. From the mid-1920's Luciano dominated the drug and prostitute traffic in downtown Manhattan. His strongarm men brought the area brothels in line with threats, arson, and broken legs. Lucky demanded and got a 50% slice of every house's take, as well as half of each girl's personal earnings. Before the age of thirty he was a millionaire.

By 1925 Masseria found the sycophantic Lucky indispensable and made him his chief lieutenant. Meanwhile Luciano formed associations and alliances with other leading mobsters, including Jack "Legs" Diamond. It may have been Legs Diamond who ordered Lucky taken for a ride in October, 1929, in hopes of capturing the latter's brothel racket. Luciano was given a zigzag trip across the city while brutally beaten, stabbed with an ice pick, and slashed across the throat. Unfortunately, they missed the jugular vein; when Lucky was dumped on the pavement, he was still alive. In the hospital he staunchly refused to name his attackers. He is said to be the only man ever to come back from a one-way ride.

Luciano continued as Masseria's efficient lieutenant through the famous "Castellammare War," a struggle for supremacy between Joe the Boss and Salvatore Maranzano, an ambitious Mafia *capo* ["head"]. Accordingly, on April 15th, 1931, he lured his patron Masseria into a Coney Island restaurant for a friendly lunch, then excused himself to the men's room. As prearranged, representatives of four allied gangs (soon to be infamous mobsters in their own right), Vito Genovese, Albert Anastasia, Joe Adonis, and Bugsy Siegel, entered Scarpato's restaurant to put four bullets into the double-crossed Boss.

Impressed by this peace offering, Maranzano embraced the treacherous Lucky and declared himself "boss of bosses." He was an innovator in crime and reorganized the crude Mafia into the efficient Cosa Nostra. But his reign was short. While Lucky could be a steady and dependable leader, he was willing to climb over any number of superiors to get to the top. On September 30, 1931, Lucky sent four assassins into Maranzano's office disguised as police. They swiftly put an end to the old crime lord with knife and bullet. But it was more than a hit; it was a revolution inside the Cosa Nostra. More than forty of the Mafia's top dons were simultaneously eliminated all across the country. When the smoke cleared a younger generation was in power. Lucky Luciano was now the unquestioned leader of the Cosa Nostra.

Between 1932 and 1936, Charles "Lucky" Luciano reigned supreme. The only man he really regarded as his equal was the powerful labor racketeer Louis "Lepke" Buchalter. The two of them concocted a plan to turn the many American gangs across the country into one national Syndicate. By 1934 the Syndicate had become a reality. But while Luciano was willing to work with the powerful Irish, Jewish, German, and other gangs of the day, he was developing the Cosa Nostra to one day take everything. He kept comparatively few gunmen himself, but had such strong alliances with Lepke and other mobsters that no one leaned on Lucky.

The first Syndicate boss Lucky double-crossed was Dutch Schultz. When Dutch got into tax trouble, Lucky did his best to grab his beer and gambling concerns. But the Dutchman was slippery and beat the rap. Lucky got his next chance in 1935, when Schultz asked the Syndicate to assassinate Thomas E. Dewey, the special prosecutor who was giving him so much trouble. The syndicate refused, but the Dutchman swore he'd do the job without them. On the pretext of this breech of discipline Lepke and Lucky pushed through a motion to murder Schultz, saving Dewey's life.

Ironically, the death of Schultz allowed Dewey to concentrate on Lucky Luciano. Under pressure of investigation, Luciano relocated to Hot Springs, Arkansas. But the law finally got some madams and prostitutes to testify about Luciano's extortion racket. He was arrested and in 1936 sentenced to 30-50 years.

He served less than ten years before he made a deal with the government. He was paroled and deported, after which he lived in Naples, Italy. From exile he still controlled important interests in the States as well as most of the smuggling of illegal immigrants and drugs into the country. On January 26, 1962 he died of a heart attack at Naple's Capodichino Airport.

Charles "Lucky" Luciano was small (5'7") and slender, with black hair, brown eyes. He was good-looking, though he had a drooping eyelid and knife scars on his neck, chin and ears, these being tokens from his famous "ride" in 1929. He was stylish and had three wall-length closets full of $500 suits at his suite (39-C at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, where he lived as "Charles Ross"). Besides money and clothes, he was interested in jewels, race horses and beautiful women.

When taking in the town – often accompanied by attractive showgirls – he patronized certain nightclubs on Broadway, such as the Hollywood and the Paradise. He was also a regular at Dave's Blue Room on Seventh Avenue, and the Vilanova on Sixth. Sentimentality sometimes brought him back to his old haunts on Mulberry Street. When so found he should be accompanied by 0-5 bodyguards. When on a date (50% chance) these guards will stay at a discrete distance.

If followed, there is scant chance Luciano's activities will provide evidence for the police. His business is transacted in the privacy of his hotel suite, usually late at night since Lucky is an insomniac. He uses coded telephone messages to pass orders, or whispers them to Moe Ducore at the latter's drugstore at 49th and 7th, from whence they will be passed on to Lucky's minions. If leaned on, Lucky will be carrying a gun 70% of the time.

ARTHUR "DUTCH SCHULTZ" FLEGENHEIMER 1902-1935

for *Gangster!*

Intelligence: 17	Agility: 9
Dexterity: 10	Luck/Intuition: 5
Strength: 16	Streetwise: Level 2
Personality: 17	Street Fighter: Level 2
Loualty: 11	

for *Call of Cthulhu*

STR 16 DEX 10 INT 17 CON 16
CHA 17 POW 12 SIZ 10 SAN 65 EDU 5

SKILLS: Fast Talk 25%; Credit Rating 55%; Drive Auto 40%; Listen 65%; Bargain 10%; Law 10%; Dynamite 25%; Submachine Gun 25%; Revolver 60%; Shotgun 40%; Smaller Knife 45%.

With a few notable lapses, the New York mobs normally eschewed the kind of casual violence prevalent in the Midwestern cities. The major exception to that rule was Arthur Flegenheimer, alias "Dutch Schultz." His wild shoot-'em-up temperament would have made him at home in Al Capone's Chicago – where he could have given Scarface Al a run for his money.

Born to a Bronx saloonkeeper, young Flegenheimer's formal education ended at the fourth grade. At the age of fourteen, when his father deserted the family, he took a decisive turn toward crime. Joining the Bergen Avenue gang, he was involved in numerous street fights, burglaries and stick-ups. Finally, in 1919, a burglary rap stuck and he had to serve out a fifteen month sentence. By the time he came

Arthur "Dutch Schultz" Flegenheimer

out, Prohibition had dawned and he saw the work of his life. Somehow he found the funds to buy into a saloon and adopted the name "Dutch Schultz" (after a New York thug who brawled his way to fame about twenty years before).

The Dutchman, as he was often called, was stocky, blue-eyed, and fair-haired, standing 5' 9" tall. He was pushy and pugnacious; he had to be in order to get anywhere in the first rush to grab a share of the New York hooch racket. Unlike Lucky Luciano, he had no one else's organization to steal; his had to be built from the ground up. With the help of a few pals from his street-fighting days he proceeded with brutal directness.

He acquired a few more speakeasies, and stocked them with Canadian liquor hauled in his own trucks. He started brewing "needle beer" (beer with alcohol added), reputedly the worst in town. He recruited a small army of a hundred "soldiers" and did battle with some established mobs, successfully hacking off pieces of their territory for himself.

His methods were incredibly savage. When Joseph Rock, the last outside bootlegger left in Schultz's territory, wouldn't back down, Schultz's boys kidnapped him. When they were through, Rock was both blind and crippled.

Not satisfied, the Dutchman made a grab for some of "Legs" Diamond's beer racket. The Irish gangster replied by turning his hijackers loose on Schultz's beer-runners. Dutch did not believe that turnabout was fair play, so was in a permanent state of war with Diamond from 1927 on. That was always the Dutchman's way. The only time he ever backed down was when New York's top gambling czar, Arnold Rothstein, sent him a message to stay out of his racket. Rothstein helped Legs Diamond knock off a half-dozen of the Dutchman's soldiers in just three days.

Rothstein backed Diamond in his war with Schultz. Legs held his own until he was distracted by legal problems. Taking the initiative, Dutch drastically reduced Diamond's city territory. At last the feuding mobsters met to settle their differences. Dutch gave Diamond a half million for the territory he had already stolen. But when Dutch left the meeting at the old Harding Hotel (1929) gunmen started blasting from an alley, cutting down Schultz's companion, Joey Noe. Schultz, unhit, pulled out his own gun and drove the others off. He swore vengeance against Diamond's whole outfit. It was probably Bo Weinberg, the Dutchman's chief lieutenant, who led the three assassins who finally aced Legs Diamond in his Albany boarding house room (12/18/31).

Gang wars aside, Dutch Schultz did not stand still. Despite his crude directness, he was smart enough to see opportunities where others had not. The favorite form of gambling among the poor of the slums was the "numbers game" also called the "policy racket." Harlem was the heart of the racket and once his mind was made up, Schultz moved directly to crash it. He terrorized the independent policy bankers into paying him tribute. Then, when they were all under his thumb, he replaced them with his own men. Dutch's new acquisition was worth a fortune.

While the conflict with Legs Diamond still burned, Schultz was challenged by a former underling, Vincent Coll, a young Irish gunsel. Coll used the same methods as his ex-boss and was even more savage. Coll's capacity for thoughtless violence appalled even his fellow mobsters, who gave him the nickname "Mad Dog." Amid the frenzy of mob killings, Mad Dog had the nerve to open a speakeasy only a half block from the Dutchman's main office.

At the height of the conflict Coll tried to machinegun three Schultz henchmen he spotted on East 107 Street (July 1932), but only managed to shoot five small children playing nearby, killing one. The city screamed for Mad Dog's blood, but by retaining one of New York's most expensive lawyers, Samuel Liebowitz, he won an acquittal.

The Dutchman finally got Coll in a very cinematographic manner. While a Schultz ally tied Coll up on the telephone, Dutch traced the call to a drugstore on West 23rd street. The booth, containing Coll, exploded as the killers' machineguns went off.

With both Diamond and Coll out of the way, Dutch Schultz was supreme in the NYC policy, slot machine, and restaurant rackets. But already the IRS was looking at the crimelord's unpaid taxes. The ensuing trial was long and most of his rivals bet he never would slip the noose. Lucky Luciano moved in on Schultz's rackets, though they both sat on the same high council in the new national crime Syndicate. He persuaded the Dutchman's lieutenant, Bo Weinberg, to help connive at Luciano's take-over. Schultz beat the IRS rap, and the first order of business upon his return was to ask the sadistic killer Bugsy Siegal to make the disloyal Weinberg disappear.

While that part was easy, getting back what he had lost was harder. He relocated to Newark, N. J. in an attempt to rebuild his empire. But special prosecutor Thomas E. Dewey was

not about to give him the chance. In a rage over his persecution, Schultz demanded the death of Dewey, but the Syndicate wouldn't go along with it, fearing the great public outcry that would result. The Dutchman swore his boys would do the job themselves, as in the old days, but that didn't fly with syndicate bosses like Lepke Buchalter and Lucky Luciano. They voted in Schultz's absence – for his death.

One of Lepke's best killers, Charlie "The Bug" Workman, went to Schultz's headquarters, the Palace Chophouse in Newark, with a pair of .38's. He found the Dutchman in the men's room and shot him, without recognizing him. Then he rushed into the main office of the restaurant with guns blazing, killing three others. In the aftermath, Schultz was rushed to the Newark City Hospital. He talked deliriously for hours, while he took 500 cc's of blood in transfusion. At the age of 33, October 23, 1935, he died without regaining consciousness.

Dutch Schultz was a crude man, with no taste in clothing, cuisine, nor women. He had a wife, Frances, but no children. If encountered, Schultz should be accompanied by 1D6 bodyguards and will carry a pistol 90% of the time.

JACK "LEGS" DIAMOND 1896-1931

for *Gangster!*

Intelligence: 16	Agility: 16
Dexterity: 12	Luck/Intuition: 6
Strength: 12	Streetwise: Level 2
Personality: 17	Marksman
Loyalty: 13	

for *Call of Cthulhu*

STR 12	DEX 12	INT 16
CON 18	CHA 17	POW 18
SIZ 10	SAN 55	EDU 5

SKILLS: Jump 60%, Fast Talk 25%, Credit Rating 45%, Drive Auto 50%, Listen 65%, Bargain 20%, Law 15%, Submachine Gun 50%, Revolver 90%, Shotgun 65%, Baseball Bat 45%, Smaller Knife 45%

Everything about John T. Nolan was flashy – the alias he went by, the style in which he lived, the bosomy mistresses. He had an Irish charm – unusual in an occupation whose practicioners were typically either lizard-cold or apishly crude. But despite his charm, he was known as the deadliest gunman in New York.

When he and his brother left their native Philadelphia for the slums of New York around 1912, they were already calling themselves Jack and Eddie Diamond. They joined the Hudson Dusters, a sneak thief outfit in whose service Jack won the name "Legs" for the way he could outrun pursuing policemen. The young thief was frequently arrested, but never held long. Picked up in February 1914, Legs served a short time in the NYC Reformatory. Joining the army during WWI, he deserted in 1919 and when caught, spent time in Leavenworth.

Prison set Jack Diamond on the trail to big-time crime. His "pen-pals" put him in touch with an important New York labor racketeer called "Little Augie" Orgen. Released in 1920, Legs and his brother got a job just as Prohibition was launched. Their first assignment was to run illegal Canadian hooch in northern New York State. For good performance, Little Augie let them into his narcotics and stolen jewel operations.

Legs' skill with the gun plus his head for organizing and planning made him invaluable to Orgen. He was soon promoted to chief lieutenant, though he made a valuable alliance by farming out his services as a bodyguard to the gambling kingpin, Arnold Rothstein.

Little Augie had been in a long-running conflict with a rival labor racketeer, "Kid Dropper" Kaplan. Legs Diamond came up with a plan to put Kaplan on the spot. He had one of Orgen's soldiers, "Gurrah" Shapiro, bring charges against Kaplan for assault. Naturally, Shapiro was not expected to break the underworld code and testify, but in order to appear in court, Kid Dropper had to come out into the open. Once he did, a reckless assassin caught up with him – in the back of a police car. A grateful Little Augie thanked Diamond by letting him run his drug and bootleg concessions between Manhattan and Albany.

Finally able to live in a manner to which he wanted to become accustomed, Legs was soon a familiar figure at Broadway plays and good nightclubs (he was fond of dancing). He had his pick of beautiful showgirls, one of which (Kiki Roberts) became his mistress on a long-term basis. Diamond's wife, Alice (whom he had married in 1920), did not seem to mind.

Diamond's star rose until 1927, by which time he ranked with the Big Apple's most successful mob leaders. He continued to play court to Little Augie. Little Augie's affairs had been bullish since the execution of Kid Dropper, but now younger hoodlums were groping for his territory.

Jack "Legs" Diamond

A pair of his ex-enforcers – Lepke Buchalter and Gurrah Shapiro – were infringing on his interests in the garment industry.

On October 15, 1927, Diamond was acting as little Augie's bodyguard when the door of a cab they had hailed flew open and a machine-gunner hiding in the back seat started blasting. Orgen took twelve slugs and died instantly; the wounded Legs shuffled off and was rushed to Bellevue Hospital. For a time it looked as though he would die of blood loss.

But the tenacious mobster held on. As he recovered he stubbornly refused to name his boss's killers, though he had clearly recognized them as Buchalter and Shapiro. Once on his feet, he got the deadly pair off his back by waiving any claim to Little Augie's union racket and concentrated on annexing the vacant liquor and drug empire.

But if Diamond wanted peace, what he got was Dutch Schultz. The pushy beer baron had been clawing his way to the top of the Bronx hooch racket since the beginning of the decade; now he wanted Legs Diamond's racket – all of it. Legs decided the Dutchman needed a lesson and turned hijackers loose on Schultz's booze convoys. The latter howled with rage and committed himself to a long and bloody war.

Schultz seemed to be getting the worst of it until Diamond's principal ally, Arnold Rothstein, was murdered, (for welshing on a $50,000 gambling debt). Next, (June 13, 1929) Legs, always too quick on the trigger, shot two brawlers in his Hotsy Totsy club and had to go into hiding.

Dutch Schultz took the opportunity to start dismantling Diamond's bootleg empire. When Legs reappeared, he managed to get the murder case dismissed, but the Dutchman now had the upper hand in the gang war. Consequently, Diamond arranged a meeting with Schultz and offered to sell off the territory he had already lost. He received a half million in cash on the spot, but when Dutch and an associate reached the street, two of Diamond's gunmen opened up on them. The hit was fumbled and the war flared up again.

Even with Schultz and other dangerous mobsters (such as Lucky Luciano) out for his blood, Legs Diamond managed to hang on for another two years. When Schultz's brothers went all the way to Denver, Colorado to make an unsuccessful try on Eddy Diamond's life, Legs evened the score by seeing all five of his brother's assailants dead within the year. In October 1929, the Dutchman aimed at Legs himself, sending three men to hit him at Kiki Roberts' apartment, where he was dining. Legs took five bullets, but once again lived.

The papers dubbed Legs the "Clay Pigeon" since he lived as a target. He tried to get out of the heat by touring Europe, but both England and Belgium turned him away. When he returned, dejected, Schultz tried again. Emerging from the Aratoga Inn in Acra, New York, April 1930, he was hit several times more.

Surviving, Legs touched off a journalistic sensation. The repeated failures to finish his rival had Dutch worried. If he didn't get Diamond, sooner or later Diamond would get him.

Evidently Legs never thought seriously about retiring. In December 1931 he was still up to his old tricks. This time he was torturing a pair of upstate bootleggers (Grover Parks and James Duncan) into cooperating with his operation. They were persuaded by the use of lighted cigarettes, matches under their fingernails, and a white-hot poker, but once released they ran swiftly to the law.

Legs had to stand trial. While he did so, he received several marriage proposals from women who wanted to reform him. He got off the hook when a confederate, John Scaccio, took the fall for him.

Diamond returned to Albany in a festive mood. He and his wife entertained dozens of mobster pals on December 17, 1931. But after midnight Legs stole away to rendezvous with Kiki Roberts. After leaving her, he returned to a rented room at 67 Dove Street. About 4:45 a.m. he received three uninvited visitors. The landlady heard the shooting. Five bullets had finally broken the Clay Pigeon.

Jack "Legs" Diamond is thin, 5' 11" tall, brown haired and brown eyed. If at leisure, he is accompanied by a lady friend 50% of the time. He has 1D6 bodyguards 60% of the time. He always carries a gun.

LOUIS "LEPKE" BUCHALTER 1897-1944

for *Gangster!*

Intelligence: 18	Agility: 11
Dexterity: 10	Luck/Intuition: 6
Strength: 9	Streetwise: Level 2
Personality: 18	
Loyalty: 12	

for *Call of Cthulhu*

STR 9	DEX 10	INT 18
CON 11	CHA 18	POW 15
SIZ 8	SAN 90	EDU 6

SKILLS: Fast Talk 35%, Credit Rating 65%, Listen 60%, Bargain 20%, Spot Hidden 40%, Law 20%, Submachine Gun 40%, Revolver 50%

Until 1939, when his cover fell away, few would have classed Louis "Lepke" Buchalter with America's leading crimelords – no one except those on the inside of organized crime. Although he was an independent mobster, he was even more powerful than Lucky Luciano, and even more insidious. Most of his kind preyed upon the vices of man – liquor, drugs, prostitution, and gambling – but Lepke took his cut from the innocent needs of decent people: their garments, the food they put on their table, the show tockets they purchased, the very day-to-day jobs they worked at.

He was born Louis Bookhouse; his family was poor, but of all his siblings he was the only one to become a criminal. His appearance disguised his character. He was small (5' 7") and slender with brown eyes and hair. He looked almost apologetic and never showed anger or excitement. In maturity he was a good husband and father; he refrained from gambling and drink. Yet he coldly ordered the deaths of scores of men and didn't even have the excuse of passion to hide behind.

Young Lepke ran away from home in 1915 and came to the attention of the New York Police as a burglar and sneak thief. Once he was picked up wearing stolen shoes; both for the left foot. Before 1922 he did two stretches in Sing Sing, totalling three years. By that time there was a lot of action in the mobs, and pint-sized Lepke wanted a piece of it.

He had brains and patience; what he lacked was muscle. He allied himself with powerful but slow-witted "Gurrah" Shapiro to supply it. They started a protection racket among small shopkeepers and pushcart peddlers and earned the name of the "Gorilla Boys." Like many other fledgling gang bosses, they worked for a time under the protective wing of labor-racketeer "Little Augie" Orgen.

Within three years, Orgen's underlings, Gurrah and Lepke, were trying to take over the union garment racket. On October 15, 1927, Lepke, in a cab driven by Gurrah, opened up his machinegun on Little Augie, killing him. With Orgen out of the picture, Lepke gained freedom of movement.

Lepke took over the stewardship of a union by beating up or murdering any leaders who opposed him. Once in charge, the union members were soaked for kickbacks and employers were forced to pay Lepke off to prevent ruinous strikes.

In 1927 Lepke went for the jugular of the garments industry. He realized that the small Cutters union could bring a multi-million dollar industry to a halt and stop the work of 50,000 employees. His thugs could easily dominate the nineteen hundred union members; after they had done so, Lepke demanded huge payoffs to keep the cutters off the picket line.

He battered his way into the Trucking unions, getting a stranglehold on every merchant who had furs, baked goods, or machinery to ship. When he took over the Motion Pictures Operators union everyone who bought a show ticket put money into his pock-

Louis "Lepke" Buchalter, fourth from left.

et. He invested his fortune in large-scale bootlegging and narcotics smuggling. By the early 1930's Lepke had an income of over fifty million dollars per year.

Even more than Luciano, Lepke was the organizing genius behind the national crime Syndicate. It was formally established in 1934 and led by the top American mobsters: Vito Genovese, Thomas Lucchese, "Longy" Zwillman, Meyer Lansky, Dutch Schultz, Frank Costello, Joe Adonis, Albert Anastasia, and Lepke's pal Gurrah Shapiro.

But the independent Dutch Schultz never really fitted into the organization; before long, Luciano and Lepke were looking for ways to cut him out. Their chance came when the Dutchman swore to kill prosecutor Thomas E. Dewey. The Syndicate voted to liquidate Schultz, and one of Lepke's worst killers, Charlie "The Bug" Workman, decapitated the Schultz mob in one audacious stroke. Lepke appropriated Schultz's huge restaurant operation, while the Cosa Nostra took over his policy racket.

Already by 1933 Lepke's army of gunsels was larger than he needed, but instead of firing his killers, he came up with an idea worth of him. His best men became a corps of traveling enforcers, to see that the Syndicate's edicts were carried out all across the country. There would be no new mobs; if any tried to form, the Syndicate's killers snuffed them out. Any new cities opened up to crime were run by agents in vassalage to an old established gang. The Syndicate's plan worked efficiency. When the Syndicate wanted Detroit in 1933, Lepke's men simply took the leadership of the powerful and war-wise Purple Gang for a ride.

Besides using his men to eliminate competition, Lepke got Syndicate approval to hire out his soldiers as assassins. To the abstemious and family-loving Buchalter, murder was just another transaction. This was the beginning of the infamous Murder Inc.

Lepke's money and influence kept him clear of the law until 1933, when he and Gurrah drew a one-year sentence for anti-trust violations. To their rescue came U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Martin T. Manton, one of a large troop of public officials who labor tirelessly to keep organized crime in the saddle. He smoothly reversed the decision and put Lepke back on the street.

By 1937, Lepke's oversized army began to have discipline problems. Some of its members started to talk when they got into trouble. Lepke's drug rings began to break, certain union operations started to cave-in. Under police harassment, the crime czar went undercover, hiding in the upstairs of the Oriental Palace, a low-brow Brooklyn dancehall.

Trouble didn't sweeten Lepke's disposition; from his hideout he issued dozens of assassination orders against anyone he considered a security risk. By 1938 there was a federal warrent and a $50,000 reward on him. His Syndicate associates were sympathetic, but not so sympathetic that Thomas Lucchese didn't try to move into his union territory. Lepke sent a message, and Lucchese backed off — Lepke still had Murder Incorporated to make his word stick.

Finally an associate, Moey Wolinsky, told Lepke that a deal was made. He would be sent up for a few years on federal drug charges and would not be touched by the New York prosecutors, who wanted him for worse crimes. He surrendered (8/24/39) and drew a fourteen year sentence.

But there was no deal. Lepke found that out when one of his Murder Inc. lieutenants, "Kid Twist" Reles, started talking like no mobster had ever talked before (nor again till Joe Valachi in 1964). The extent of Lepke's operations became clear. Witnesses were found to some of his murders and in 1940 he was put on trial for his life.

Lepke fought back. Many of the witnesses the government depended upon were murdered mob-style. Murder Inc. worked a dark miracle on November 12, 1941, when somehow Kid Twist was hurled to his death out of the window of a heavily-guarded apartment. Moey Wolinsky was gunned down in 1943. Buchalter drew a death sentence for one of his murders (the key witness in the murder had been shot twice, before the trial but survived), but repeated appeals kept him alive and issuing death orders for three years. It was always in doubt whether or not his corrupt power might win him his release in the end.

Finally, on March 4, 1944, following the execution of some of his accomplices, Lepke Buchalter defiantly took the chair himself. He became the only top Syndicate boss to pay for his crimes with his life.

Whenever encountered, Lepke should be under heavy guard. When he moves about, he is guarded by 1D6 top hands from Murder Inc. He is also protected by fear of his organization. With so much muscle, Lepke need not carry a gun more than 30% of the time.

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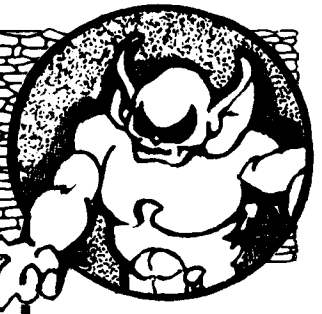

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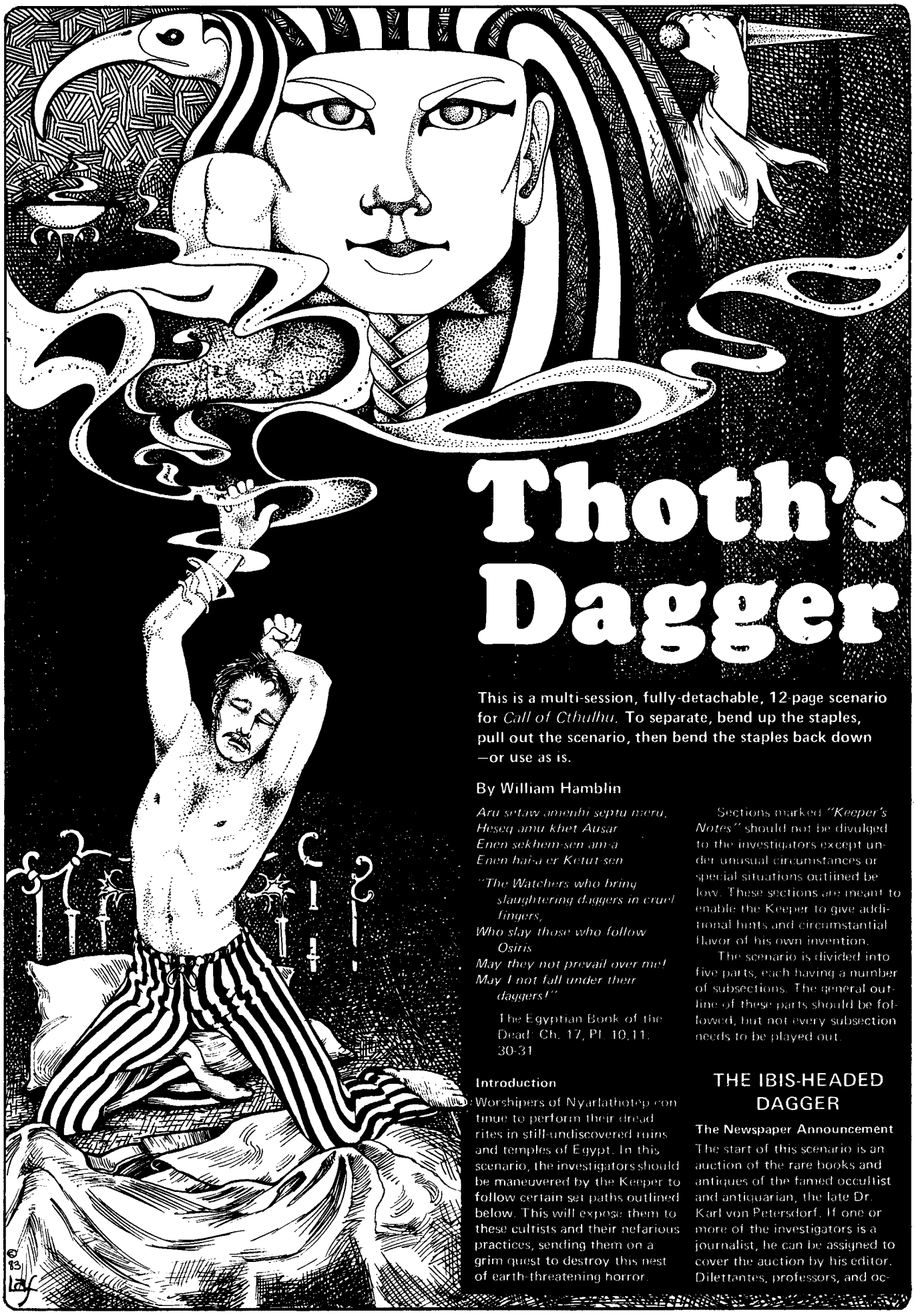


illustrations by Lisa A. Free

Thoth's Dagger

This is a multi-session, fully-detachable, 12-page scenario for *Call of Cthulhu*. To separate, bend up the staples, pull out the scenario, then bend the staples back down —or use as is.

By William Hamblin

Aru setaw ameuhi septu nseru,
Heseq amu khet Ausar
Enen sekhem-sen am-a
Enen hai-a er Ketut-sen

"The Watchers who bring slaughtering daggers in cruel fingers,
Who slay those who follow Osiris
May they not prevail over me!
May I not fall under their daggers!"

The Egyptian Book of the Dead: Ch. 17, Pl. 10,11, 30-31

Introduction

Worshipers of Nyarlathotep continue to perform their dread rites in still-undiscovered ruins and temples of Egypt. In this scenario, the investigators should be maneuvered by the Keeper to follow certain set paths outlined below. This will expose them to these cultists and their nefarious practices, sending them on a grim quest to destroy this nest of earth-threatening horror.

Sections marked *"Keeper's Notes"* should not be divulged to the investigators except under unusual circumstances or special situations outlined below. These sections are meant to enable the Keeper to give additional hints and circumstantial flavor of his own invention.

The scenario is divided into five parts, each having a number of subsections. The general outline of these parts should be followed, but not every subsection needs to be played out.

THE IBIS-HEADED DAGGER

The Newspaper Announcement

The start of this scenario is an auction of the rare books and antiques of the famed occultist and antiquarian, the late Dr. Karl von Petersdorf. If one or more of the investigators is a journalist, he can be assigned to cover the auction by his editor. Dilettantes, professors, and oc-

cult investigators in general should not want to pass up this chance to get some of von Petersdorf's priceless possessions. If the investigators do not know each other from past scenarios, they can meet at the auction. The interest of the investigators can be raised by presenting the following advertisement in local papers:

PUBLIC AUCTION

The library and art collection of the late Dr. Karl von Petersdorf will be sold at public auction on the 23rd of November, 19—— [give an appropriate year in the 1920's], at his estate outside Boston [or other large city convenient to your campaign] at 10:00 am.

The late Dr. von Petersdorf was well-known among art collectors, scholars, and occultists for his study of ancient Egyptian antiquities, mythology, and magic. His views, though never accepted by the scholarly community at large [in fact, professorial investigators will recall that his concepts were considered eccentric in the extreme], created some stir among Egyptologists when he recently published the results of his life's research in his book, *"The Antiquity of the Egyptian Religion,"* in which he expounded the thesis that the Egyptian religion did not evolve from the primitive and superstitious animal worship of savages, but instead devolved from a forgotten higher form of worship, of which only hints and obscure references have come down to us. Tragically, Dr. von Petersdorf died suddenly, shortly after his book went to press. A further disaster marked this book's publication, as the publisher's warehouse burned down before distribution had begun, destroying all copies of Dr. von Petersdorf's opus except for a few copies shipped to reviewers.

The late Doctor's library includes many rare books on Egyptology, as well as a number of unique copies of ancient Egyptian manuscripts. The art collection includes some remarkable Egyptian artifacts, many of great beauty, and some of which are unique. All private persons or representatives of public and private institutions are welcomed to the auction.

Keeper's Note: In reality, Dr. von Petersdorf died of fright from seeing the Black Faceless One (Nyarlathotep) summoned by the Egyptian cultist Khalid Abd al-Azi. The publishing house was burned down by Khalid's band to prevent distribution of his book, which went far in exposing their rites.

If the investigators attempt to find an obituary of Dr. von Petersdorf, they will read that Dr. von Petersdorf, though in excellent health, died of a combined massive heart attack and stroke.

If the investigators attempt to interrogate Dr. von Petersdorf's neighbors (the closest of whom lives nearly a half mile away), they will find out that the neighbors heard a grotesque howling at Dr. von Petersdorf's estate on the night of his death. *(Keeper's Note: this was the Blind Faceless One screaming at the moon, as is his wont.)* It will take a successful Fast Talk or Oratory to find out this information by causing the neighbors to trust the investigators. None of the neighbors wants to know any more about Dr. von Petersdorf's death. The howling was enough for them.

If the investigators check the phases of the moon on Dr. von Petersdorf's death, they can find that it was full.

If the investigators go to a major local university, they can contact Dr. John Quincy Rogers, professor Emeritus of Egyptology. Dr. Rogers was one of the reviewers of Dr. von Petersdorf's book. If asked about it, he will tell the investigators that he has skimmed through the book and found it to be rubbish. If asked about specifics, he will state that it discussed various mighty gods, older than those of later Egypt, but he can't remember the names of these supposed early gods, "perhaps it is pronounced something unusual like "Kath-low." he says. If he is asked for a look at the copy, he will say he has given it to the university library.

If the university library is visited, the investigators will find after some search (a successful Library Use is needed) that the book is cataloged, but missing. It has not been checked out nor is it in the stacks. *(Keeper's Notes: the Egyptian cultists have stolen this copy of the book.)*

At the Von Petersdorf Estate

(Keeper's Note: the investigators come to a stately mansion some distance outside town, which is a little dilapidated. The key item in the auction is Thoth's Dagger, but the investigators should not know this at this time (unless they can guess it from the title of the scenario). Inside the mansion they will find a crowd of some twenty or thirty buyers. Included below are four non-player-characters of some import. The potential importance of these people should not be made openly known to the investigators. It can be discovered by chance, and the Keeper can certainly put some 'dummy' non-player-characters into the room as well, so the investigators won't know who are the most important people to meet.

William Fredericks

A moderately wealthy man about 45 years old. He is somewhat eccentric, and wears oddly mismatched clothing. He is of medium height, well-built, with uncombed brown hair balding at the front.

STR 14 CON 13 SIZ 12
INT 16 POW 8 DEX 10
CHA 12 EDU 17 SAN 84

SKILLS: English 85%, German 65%, French 50%, Ancient Egyptian 50%, Archaeology 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 00%, History 40%, Library Use 70%, Occult 10%

He has brought $3000 to the auction. He has no desire to purchase the dagger, but will approach whoever buys it and ask to examine it. The only item he will bid on is the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* with marginal notes (described later).

Clifton Jorgensen

He is an independent art collector and occult enthusiast, about 30 years old, tall, with dark hair, pale skin, and a slender frame. He is the heir to a large fortune which he spends freely.

STR 10 CON 11 SIZ 14
INT 12 POW 15 DEX 14
CHA 14 EDU 14 SAN 15

SKILLS: English 70%, French 70%, Archaeology 25%, Astronomy 15%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, History 25%, Occult 80%, Psychology 35%, Drive Auto 60%, Pilot Aircraft 50%

SPELLS: Contact Hound of Tindalos, Brew Space-Mead, Summon Nightgaunt

It should be noted that Jorgensen's SAN is quite low, due to his extensive studies in the occult and many experiments with drugs. He could well go raving mad if he encountered a horrendous experience. He knows some spells, but has never cast them, and privately doubts whether they would work. He also is a millionaire, having $5,000,000 in the bank and other investments. This is the best reason for getting to know him. He has as much money as necessary to purchase the dagger, or any other item, if he decides he wants it. On any item that the investigators bid for, roll 1D6 to see how much Jorgensen is willing to spend: on a roll of 1-2 he doesn't want to buy it; 3 he will spend up to $2000; 4 he will spend up to $5000; 5 he will spend up to $10,000; and on a 6 he will purchase the item no matter what he must bid. (Since he is a millionaire, he will be able to outbid anyone else present.) If he bids on the dagger, but does not purchase it, he will ask to be allowed to inspect it. Whether he buys the dagger or not, he will remain and continue to sporadically bid until the auction ends.

Butrus al-Qusi

This character will prove to be one of the most important as far as the investigators are concerned. He is short with a dark complexion and a large full black beard, wearing a conservative black suit and a tarboosh. He is a high ranking Coptic (i.e., Egyptian Christian) monk, posing as a collector of Egyptian antiquities. His real mission is from the Abbot of the Monastery of Saint Pakomios, which is in Egypt near the shore of the Red Sea. He was commissioned by his Abbot to meet with Dr. von Petersdorf. The Abbot and a few select monks are involved in a protracted, losing, struggle with the secret cultists of Nyarlathotep and other Elder Gods in Egypt. Butrus was to learn all that Dr. von Petersdorf knew concerning the Cthulhu mythos and to try and enlist his aid in the monastery's fight against the cultists. However, the doctor was murdered on the very day the meeting was to occur.

STR 12 CON 15 SIZ 12
INT 14 POW 16 DEX 10
CHA 11 EDU 13 SAN 75

SKILLS: Arabic 65%, English 50%, Coptic 65%, Ancient Egyptian 20%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Listen 65%, Bargain 50%, Debate 40%, Oratory 40%

SPELLS: Elder Sign, Contact Sand Dweller

He also wishes to buy the dagger, and has 5000 dollars to pay for it. If he is unable to outbid the highest bidder, he will approach whoever purchases the dagger and offer to buy it at cost +20% as soon as he can obtain more money from Egypt on a bank draft.

George DiVita

He is a small-time mafioso who has been hired by Khalid Abd al-Azi the leader of the evil cultists. He is tall and muscular (and, of course, wears a pin-striped suit). If the investigators make their Spot Hidden rolls, they will notice a slight bulge under his coat over his heart (his gun). Most of his characteristics are immaterial. The relevant ones are below.

STR 17 CON 16 SIZ 16
INT 14 POW 15

.38 automatic pistol attack 75%

He will participate in the bidding on the dagger, but does not intend to win the bidding, and will lose to either the investigators, Butrus, or Clifton Jorgensen, depending on who bids the highest. Under no circumstances will he win the bidding for Thoth's Dagger.

The Dagger

A complete description of the dagger and its significance follows. The Keeper should allow the investigators to learn this information bit by bit, through diligent effort.

The dagger is about a foot long. The handle is 5" long and the blade 7". The blade is thin with a hieroglyphic inscription on one side. The handle is bronze and formed into the shape of an ibis head (successful Occult or Zoology rolls will reveal the fact that the ibis is a species of Egyptian bird sacred to Thoth). The bird's neck forms the actual handle, the head of the bird is the pommel, and the ibis' bill forms a type of handguard, so that the fingers are inserted between the bill and the neck in gripping the dagger.

The inscription on the blade of the dagger (which is actual Egyptian hieroglyphics) has a dual significance: a translation and a transliteration (that is, a rendering in English sounds of how an Egyptian would have pronounced the inscription). The hieroglyphics themselves are given in Figure 2. There are six possible translations, all of which would be correct:

There is no rest at the place of judgment
There is no peace at the place of judgment
There is no rest at the gateway
There is no rest through the gateway
There is no peace at the gateway
There is no peace through the gateway

The significance of this inscription will become clear later in the scenario when (or if) the investigators find the gateway in question.

The investigators should be given these translations only if they can get someone to read the inscription for them. If one of the investigators has Ancient Egyptian as a Read Language skill, he must successfully make his skill roll to be given the translation. All the investigators with the appropriate skill may try to read the inscription. If they have a skill of 05-15%, and make their skill roll, they learn only a single version of the translation. If they have a skill of 16-30%, they can learn two versions, and if they have a skill of 31-40% they can learn three different variations of the inscription. If an investigator has a skill of 41% or more, and he makes his skill roll, he will be able to figure out all six variations. *(Keeper's Note: If an investigator fails to make his roll, the Keeper should feel free to tell him that he succeeded, but give him a false translation, such as: "Hotep [here taken to be a personal name as was often used by the Egyptians] is not [or is] at the door.")*

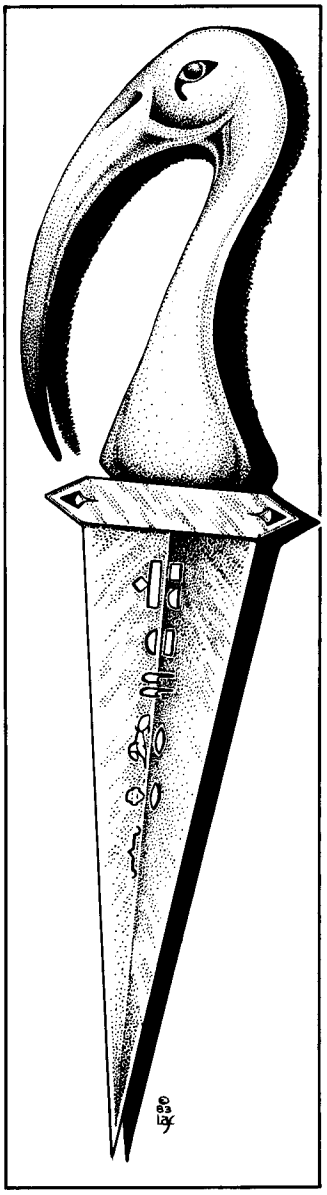
If the investigators ask an Egyptologist to translate it for them, they will be able to get all six possible inscriptions exactly as given above. William Fredericks, who may be met with during the scenario, is capable of such a translation.

However, the transliteration of the hieroglyhics is of primary interest. The standard reading is given as follows:

Transliteration	*Translation*
ny	not
har	at or through
rut	gateway or place of judgment
hotep	peace or rest

The standard transliteration is therefore "ny har rut hotep." However, there is a significant variation in the pronunciation of the third word "rut." This word (the symbol of the crouching lion) is usually pronounced "r" in classical Egyptian. However, it is also occasionally pronounced "l" as in the names "Cleopatra" and "Ptolemy." In both of these cases, the "l" is written with the crouching lion glyph.

Therefore, a perfectly acceptable variant transliteration would be "ny har lut hotep" which in pronunciation is essentially identical to the Lovecraftian "Nyarlathotep." The investigators can make whatever use of this information they please. The trasliteration can be given to the investigators only under three circumstances.



(1) If an investigator himself has a Read Egyptian skill and translates the hieroglyphics himself, he should try to make both his Cthulhu Mythos skill roll and his Idea roll. If he makes either, he can be given both transliterations. If he fails both, he should only be given the first, and that only if he asks for it.

(2) If one of the investigators asks a scholar of Egyptology to translate the inscription and specifically asks for a transliteration as well as a translation, the scholar will oblige him.

In both of these first two situations, even if the investigators get the transliteration, the Keeper should only give them the "ny har lut hotep" rendition. Let the players figure out how close it is to Nyarlathotep for themselves. They should enjoy such a discovery, and it may even give them a chill or two. Incidentally, the hieroglyphics, translations, and transliterations of the hieroglyphics portrayed in this scenario are all legitimate and accurate.

(3) If a non-player-character with at least a 30% knowledge of Ancient Egyptian and a 20% knowledge in the Cthulhu Mythos (this includes both Alfredo Monteverdi and Abba Shanuda, who appear later. Only Abba Shanuda knows that the dagger itself is the gateway.) sees the inscription, he will immediately start to tell the investigators what a unique inscription it is, and give them both transliterations and some hypotheses on its relationship to the name Nyarlathotep.

Significance of the Dagger

Besides the general information concerning the gateway and the name Nyarlathotep which can be gained from the dagger, it has an intrinsic significance of its own. It is made entirely of pure silver and is extremely ancient. It is also the only one of its kind made. It was used to perform human sacrifices by the cultists (the neck and stomach is slit and the heart taken out). Furthermore, the dagger has magical properties. If Nyarlathotep himself is struck with the dagger, his current incarnation will be destroyed, and the god will not be able to return to earth until summoned again at the next full moon. This information can be gained only if an investigator has at least a 50% Cthulhu Mythos knowledge and makes his roll, or if he can find it in one of his ancient books of lore. (Abba Shanuda already knows this fact, and could tell the investigators outright.)

Table 2 — Hieroglyph Translations and Transliterations

Transliteration	*ny*	*har*	*rut (or) lut*		*hotep*
Translation	*not*	*at through*	*gateway place of judgment*		*rest peace*

The dagger itself is the "gateway" mentioned in the inscription. If a human is sacrificed in the manner described above, his soul will pass to Azathoth where he will see the mysteries of chaos and return to be reincarnated as a slave of Azathoth on earth. For this reason, only the highest and most insane members of the cult are ever sacrificed with the dagger since it is considered a great privilege. On the other hand, the dagger is also a gateway in that Nyarlathotep can be sent back whence he came with it.

Clearly the dagger is of great value to both the cultists and those opposing them, and both groups want desperately to get their hands on it. This fact must be kept in mind by the Keeper as the central feature in the course of the scenario.

The Auction

At the auction, there are two items for sale which relate to the Cthulhu Mythos. One is the dagger, which is described above, while the other is an old papyrus, actually an ancient copy of the Egyptian Book of the Dead. This copy has special significance, because an ancient Cthulhu cultist wrote marginal notes (in Demotic Egyptian) commenting on the rites of the Book of the Dead and their relationship to the Cthulhu Mythos. The manuscript will give a +05% to a reader's knowledge of the Mythos, has a spell multiplier of x1, and a reader will take a 1D6 loss of SAN. The main text is the *Book of the Dead*, which is in standard Egyptian hieroglyphics and has been translated on a number of occasions. (If the Keeper wants a copy of the *Book of the Dead* to add extra flavor, he may consult E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead [Dover Publications, 1967 reprint of 1895 original]*). The marginal notes are in the abbreviated Demotic script and are hard to read. An extra Read Ancient Egyptian roll must be made to read the notes.

The keeper can "pad" the significant items with other items. The auction may proceed as follows:

A jeweled scarab (the scarab is a beetle thought sacred by the ancient Egyptians). The maximum price bid by anyone other than the investigators will be $1000.

The Book of the Dead with marginal notes mentioned above: maximum bid $2000

Alan Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar* (If an investigator has no Read Ancient Egyptian skill, studying this book over a month's period will raise his skill to 25%. He must keep the book to maintain this skill level, by occasional perusal. If an investigator already knows 5% or more of Read Egyptian, the book will raise his skill level by 10% to a maximum of 50%. Investigators with a skill of 40% or more can gain only 05% from this book.) Maximum bid $30.

An alabaster dish, maximum bid $300.

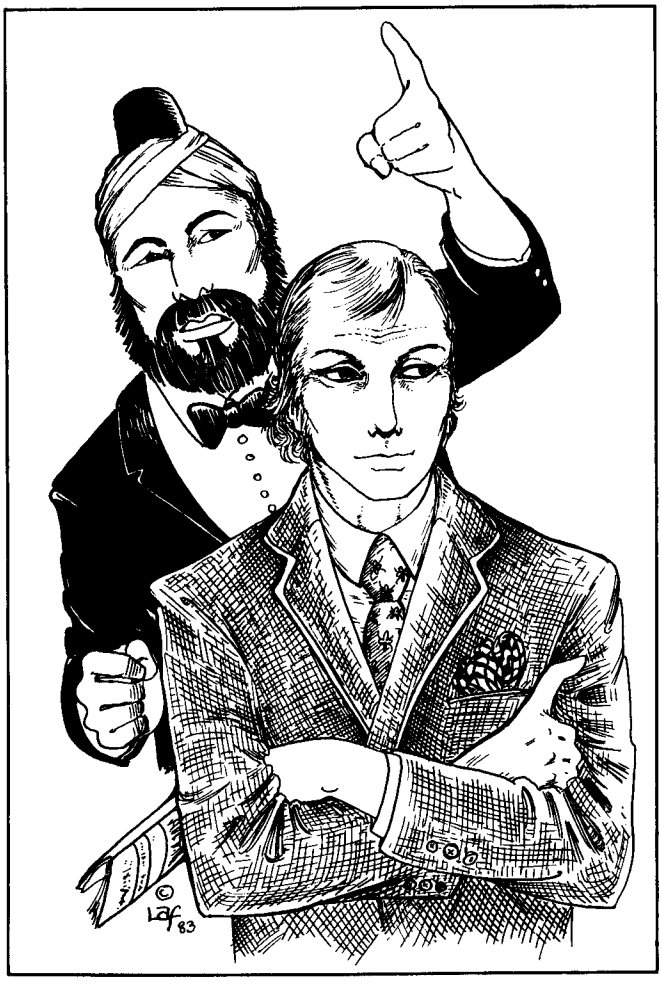
Thoth's Dagger (no maximum price).

A finely-carved stone head, maximum price $1500.

The auction should proceed as follows. Each item is brought up for bidding in the order given above. The Keeper will bid for all the non-player-characters against each other and against the individual investigators. If the investigators do not wish to bid on an item, the Keeper should assign that item to whatever non-player-character seems likeliest to buy it. If an investigator bids on an item, and his bid reaches or exceeds the maximum bid, he has purchased the item. Also, if no non-player-character outbids for an item, he can buy it. Once all the items have been sold, one of three people should be in possession of the dagger: Clifton Jorgensen, Butrus al-Qusi, or one of the investigators. (William Fredericks will not bid on the dagger – he only wants the manuscript. Giorgi DiVita will bid on the dagger, but plans to lose the bidding to another.)

If an investigator purchases the dagger, the non-player-characters may ask to examine it, as described above. If one of the non-player-characters purchases the dagger, the investigators can talk to him and examine the dagger if they so desire.

At any rate, no matter who purchases the dagger, while the auction is breaking up and the various items are handed to their new owners, Giorgi DiVita will steal the dagger. Events should be manipulated in such a fashion that the investigators are the only people present to see Giorgi pick up the dagger nonchalantly and walk quickly to the door. If the investigators raise the alarm, DiVita will pull out his pistol, fire a shot into the air (causing the crowd to panic and mill around – preventing the investigators from nearing him) and run off. As it turns out, the only people to see DiVita take the dagger are the investigators, and when the police guard rushes inside the auction (after hearing shots or commotion), he will quickly take down the information they have about the robber; i.e., description, etc. The police will then take off on a chase of DiVita. If the dagger does not belong to the investigators, whoever has purchased it will be distraught, and pathetically grateful to the investigators for their quick action in spotting the theft. Now, at least there is a chance for the dagger's recovery.



This dagger theft can serve two purposes. The most important function is to cause the investigators to be befriended by whoever has purchased the dagger. He will ask the investigators to wait up the night with him until the dagger is recovered. (He will buy them dinner at a fancy restaurant, unburden his life story, etc.) In the morning, the police will come back and inform the dagger's owner of the success of the investigation, and the officer involved will display the dagger, returning it to the proper owner with a flourish. He will then give the strange story of the quest.

"Well," says the grizzled veteran of the force, "Poor old Detective Sergeant Mike Kennedy recognized the notorious mafioso, Giorgi DiVita from your excellent description. We immediately sent a squad to his most recently known hideout, in the Italian district of the city. When we got there, the whole tenement was filled with an awful rotten-egg stink, and all the tenants were out on the sidewalk gagging. Kennedy rushed in with a rag over his mouth and crashed through DiVita's door. Then we all came in, and, lo and behold, DiVita was dead!

The room was almost completely undisturbed, except in the middle was this crisped stiff. Only the face and front part of this guy was fried, and his back, against the floor, was just fine. We checked his pockets and hair style and stuff, and we're pretty positive that the deader was DiVita in person. We have no idea what killed him. Maybe it was another mobster settling an old score with a blowtorch."

(Keeper's Notes: What actually happened is that DiVita had returned to his apartment to meet his employer, Khalid Abd al-Azi. Khalid had given DiVita 10,000 dollars to buy the dagger. DiVita decided to simply steal the dagger and keep all the money. When he gave the dagger to Khalid, Khalid murdered DiVita, ritually slaughter-

Butrus al Qusi and William Fredericks

ing him with the dagger. Then he summoned Nyarlathotep, who burnt the body and accepted its soul into chaos. Khalid was leaving when the police arrived, and fled down the fire escape just as Kennedy burst down the front door.)

"Then one of the guys outside said he saw someone running down the fire escape, and we all ran out after him, leaving only a photographer and Patrolman Grady to guard the scene of the crime. Oh yeah, there was over 5000 bucks left scattered around the floor of the room." *(Khalid did not have time to get back all of his money before the police came in.)* "When we came outside, we saw two foreign guys run into a car and take off, so we chased them, with our sirens blaring.

"These foreign guys drove down to the docks, and we might of lost them, but Frank shot out their tires, and their car wrecked. When we pulled up, the driver got out and beat it for the railyards. Kennedy chased after the guy along with three other boys. I didn't go with them, but they claim they split up to have a better chance of finding the guy in the dark.

"In the car was one guy in the front seat , but he was stone dead with a big glass splinter through his skull. We found the knife in the glove compartment. I guess the driver couldn't get to it because the other guy was propped right up against it, and we had to do some pulling to get him out.

"Anyway, we went and searched the railyards for a few hours, but we never found the guy that ran off. But old Mike Kennedy bit the dust. We found him between the rails, dead as a doornail. Looks like the poor guy just up and had a heart attack from all the excitement. Not a mark on him. It's really pretty sad. And him only 40 years old and all. Well, I guess that's that. Since you got your knife back and all the crooks we caught were dead, I guess you can hold onto it. To be perfectly honest, I ain't holding too big a grudge against that car's driver. Anyone rough enough to do in old Giorgi DiVita is okay by me."

(Keeper's Note: Khalid, of course, killed Sgt. Kennedy by casting the Dread Curse on him repeatedly from the cover of a dark warehouse.)

The Curse of the Dagger

Any non-player-characters who are now befriended by the investigators (such as William Fredericks, Clifton Jorgensen, and/or Butrus al-Qusi) should now be considered part of the group. When the scenario mentions the "investigators," any attached non-player-characters should be included. These characters will offer their skills and try to help at solving any problems encountered, and one of them will have the dagger if he won the bidding. However, the Keeper should try to avoid using these additional allies to control the investigators' choices. Let these characters act only as the investigators ask them to act. Of course, if the investigators get too far off the track or into a hopeless situation, they can use the non-player-characters to bail them out.

The investigators can essentially do whatever they want to at this point. They will probably try to find out as much information on the dagger as they can. In a day or two, while they are all sitting together discussing the recent events, one of the investigators who is holding or touching the dagger, possibly while engaging in conversation, will suddenly begin to shake and sweat profusely, crying out and moaning.

(Keeper's Note: The character that was holding the dagger has been inflicted with the Curse of Thoth's Dagger by means of an incantation from Khalid Abd al-Azi. This character should absolutely be one of the investigators run by a player, i.e., NOT Jorgensen, Fredericks, or Butrus. The victim will have a vision (described below) every day. These visions will increase in duration as the days go by. Each day the vision will start at exactly the same time: noon, and will begin at the same point in the vision. As the length of the vision grows longer, the character will see more and more. After three days, the vision's length will double to 2 minutes in length. After three more days, it will increase to 4 minutes, and so forth. The following chart will give the duration of the visions on any given day:

Scene	Day Number	Vision Length
*1	1-3	1 minute
*2	4-6	2 minutes
*3	7-9	4 minutes
*4	10-12	8 minutes
*5	13-15	16 minutes
*6	16-18	30 minutes
*7	19-21	1 hour
*8	22-24	2 hours
*9	25-27	4 hours
*10	28-30	8 hours
*11	31-33	16 hours
*12	34+	continual

After the 34th day after the curse has begun, the seizures and visions will continue constantly throughout the entire day, and the victim is hopelessly lost.)

The Visions

When the victim has a seizure, he becomes insensible to earthly things. His mind is drawn to a different time, place, and dimension. At first, the visions last only a minute, and the victim will only see the first part of the vision. As the visions progress in length, the victim will see more and more. The points marked on the chart above with a "*" indicate where each new vision period should begin, and these numbers correspond to the numbers below. For example, during days 13-15, the victim will be shown visions 1 through 5. On the days 16-18, he will see visions 1 through 6, and so forth. With each increase in the length of the visions, the Keeper should tell the victim what new sights he beholds. The entire vision follows:

Giorgio DiVita

Vision Description Table

(1) A vast landscape is seen. It is semi-tropical in nature. There is a wide smooth-flowing river, with vast stretches of vegetation on either side.

(2) The scene then shifts up, and the viewer can see that beyond the stretches of vegetation are desert regions, with absolutely no plant life.

(3) As the viewer travels along the river bank, a city of mud brick comes into view. Some of the buildings are of large well-made bricks, finely painted in white, with symbols of men and animals in rows. (If the viewer makes his Know roll, he will recognize them as Egyptian hieroglyphics.)

(4) Some of the houses are merely reed huts daubed in mud. Brown-skinned folk can be seen carrying items, working in the fields and shops with primitive stone instruments, carrying on daily life. White birds are in the fields. If the victim succeeds at a Spot Hidden roll, he will recognize the birds as ibis, whose heads look remarkably like the handle of the dagger.

(5) A column of men can be seen walking through the town to a series of nearby stone (as opposed to mud brick) buildings. These men are dressed in magnificent finely embroidered robes.

(6) In front of the building towards which the finely robed men walk are two huge stone statues, each about 15 feet high, which are squatting animals of some type (a successful Zoology roll will identify them as Anubis baboons, a species of baboon found in Egypt; if that fails, a successful Know roll will identify them as some sort of monkey or dog-faced man). A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll will recognize the fact that these ba-

boons are fairly similar to drawings of ghouls that he has seen).

(7) The stone building into which the men are going has a hall with huge round columns. The walls and columns of the building (evidently a temple) are covered with hieroglyphs and figures of Egyptian gods and demons, all brightly painted.

(8) The group of worshipers or priests enter the temple, and go to the end of the temple. A secret panel opens, and they enter and are met by an armed guard. The guard has a face exactly similar to the faces of the huge (baboon) statues at the front of the temple. *(The first time that this guard is seen, the viewer must make a SAN roll or lose 1D6 points of Sanity. If the roll succeeds, he loses no SAN. On subsequent viewings, seeing this entity will cause no SAN loss.)* The party marches down a long stairway and into a maze of corridors and tunnels.

(9) At the end of a particularly long tunnel is seen a huge altar in front of a statue of a man with an ibis head (a successful Archaeology roll will let the viewer know that an ibis-headed man is the traditional representation of the god Thoth.) There is a ceremony of chanting and bizarre rituals going on, and a human body is stretched out on the altar.

(10) A man in black robes with a hood approaches the person on the altar. He suddenly removes his hood to reveal that his head is that of an ibis! (The viewer must make a SAN roll the first time he sees this or lose 1D4 SAN points. A successful roll indicates that no Sanity is lost.) This is not a mask, but the being's actual head. He holds a dagger which looks exactly like Thoth's Dagger and raises it over the person on the altar.

(11) Suddenly, the victim having the vision realizes that the person on the altar is himself, and that he is about to be sacrificed by the ibis-headed entity. At that moment, his point of view suddenly switches to that of himself as stretched out on the altar, and he helplessly watches the knife come down, slice open his neck, rip open his stomach, and cut out his heart. He can look down his slit body and see himself killed. All of this sacrifice is felt by the victim in horrible detail. (A successful SAN roll must be made or the victim loses 1D10 points of Sanity. A successful roll still causes him to lose 1D3 points of Sanity. This roll must be made every time that the experience is received.) The victim now begins to feel his consciousness blur and blacken, and he feels his soul falling through endless space. As he dies, he begins to hear the faint and oddly terrifying piping of a flute.

(12) The victim's consciousness dissolves into an eternal vision of the unspeakable horrors of Azathoth's throne. If the victim has ever reached this point in the vision, he will become permanently insane, and will soon die, his mind being an eternal prisoner of Azathoth.

Keeper's Note: The visions are of old religious ceremonies of the worship of the Old Gods in ancient Egypt. The site of the ceremonies is Hermopolis (modern Ashmunayn). The victim's mind has been drawn back into the ancient times when Nyarlathotep's worshipers were in power and worshiping in the temple of Thoth in old Hermopolis.

Effects of the Vision

The character will lose one point of SAN each time he has a vision (i.e., one point per day). Other than that he will be able to carry out most normal functions of life. He does not make a Sanity roll for this — he simply loses the point each time with no chance of retaining it. When the visions reach the point of lasting 4 hours once a day (this will occur on day 25) he will be so exhausted by the ordeals of the vision that he will have to rest most of the day when the vision's pressures are not on him.

There is one beneficial effect of the visions which should not be made known to the players until they have arrived in Egypt. The victim will remember the events of the vision during the period in which he is conscious and fully in control. When and if the investigators do arrive at Ashmunayn and examine the ruins of the temple of Thoth, the victim of the Dagger's Curse (hereafter designated "the accursed") will be able to recognize in the ruins the pattern of the temple and the ancient corridors he has seen in his visions. He will therefore be able to lead the investigators to the temple, the secret door, through the corridors, and to the inner shrine of Nyarlathotep. This will be discussed later.

After the First Vision

The first seizure and vision will last only one minute. The victim will probably explain what has happened, and will be quite shaken from the experience (he has lost one point of SAN). If Butrus al-Qusi is present, he will give the following explanation for what has happened:

"I must now explain to you what has occurred and the significance of the dagger. You may not be willing to believe my words, but I assure you I am speaking the truth. I am actually a Coptic (Egyptian Christian) monk. I, and a few of my brethren are fighting the spread of a Satanic cult in Egypt which worships an unspeakable evil demon. The dagger is one of the most important cultic objects for their blasphemous rituals and they will do anything to regain possession of it. I was sent here to try to stop them from gaining it. Because of the potential evil of the dagger, it may be best to destroy it. But now the dagger's curse has laid hold of one of our fellows. The Evil Ones initiated the curse, surely in order to compel our return to Egypt with the dagger. I do not know how to remove the curse. My brethren in Egypt do, however, and I propose that we leave for Egypt as quickly as possible so that my brethren can exorcise the power which has possessed our friend. I do not know the full extent of the curse, but this I do know: if the dagger is arbitrarily destroyed, our compan-

ion's soul is eternally lost. The only way to save him/her from this doom is to return with the dagger to Egypt, where the exorcism may be performed. We should leave as soon as possible, for the curse will strengthen with each passing day."

The investigators may or may not want to believe Butrus' statement, but they should nonetheless be compelled to book passage on the liner, "Ramses," bound for the Mediterranean and Alexandria, Egypt, leaving in the next few days. The investigators should make haste in assembling for travel.

ON THE "RAMSES"

Introduction

The investigators will have come aboard relatively prepared for the journey to Egypt. They will have the dagger in their possession. They will be accompanied by Butrus al-Qusi and any other non-player-characters they may have befriended at the auction, including the dagger's owner, if it does not belong to one of the investigators. One of the investigators will be under the Curse of Thoth's Dagger and will be subject to daily visions of increasing duration.

The Journey

The journey to Alexandria will take three weeks. *(Keeper's Note: this means that if the party left immediately after being cursed, the accursed will be at vision 8, and his visions will last 2 hours per day when they arrive in Alexandria.) The journey will be smooth (though the keeper could roll for sea-sickness).* If the investigators have been wise, they may have brought books to study Egyptian Hieroglyphics or Arabic (which is the current language spoken in Egypt) before they arrive in Egypt. Each investigator spending his three weeks in study can learn a total number of skill points equal to his INT minus 2D6 over the course of the journey. So, a character studying Arabic who had an INT of 15 and rolled 7 on 2D6 would add +8% to his current knowledge of Arabic.

The Murder of Butrus

(Keeper's Note: Khalid, who is on the boat with the investigators, has now decided to strike against the group by summoning up one or two Hunting Horrors. These monsters are given the mission to kill Butrus, and they should succeed in this mission.) At night, when the investigators are wandering in a somewhat secluded section of the ship. Butrus will excuse himself (nature is calling, or perhaps he is seasick) and will go around a corner away from the rest of the group. The investigators will then hear Butrus' scream, and a hideous unearthly bellowing of some alien monster. The Keeper now has a choice. When the investigators rush to Butrus' aid, they can either see only the ropy form of the Hunting Horror flapping off into the sky with Butrus' piteous wail fading into the gloom and wind, or they can actually see the black monster looming over the torn corpse of Butrus. In the latter case, the investigators will be able to fight the monster. If they defeat it, they will gain only 1D6 points of SAN, because they have failed to prevent the monster from killing Butrus (admittedly, not that they had much of a chance). A Hunting Horror is actually quite a dreadful monster and the Keeper should only have it stick around for the fight if he is reasonably certain that his investigators can hold their own against it — it is entirely possible that the Horror could wipe out the entire expedition in one fell swoop!

Anyway, Butrus is now dead: carried off into the sky, thrown into the sea, or torn to quivering pieces of flesh before the eyes of the investigators.

The Attempted Robbery

It is likely that an attempt to steal the dagger will be made by Khalid's men while the ship is still crossing the sea. This will probably occur soon after the death of Butrus. Khalid himself will not become involved, and the attempt will be somewhat bungling, since the cultists are acting with such haste. Whatever happens, the investigators should not lose the dagger in this attempt, but the attempted theft should put them on their guard and let them know that their unseen foes are on the boat with them.

FROM ALEXANDRIA TO ASHMUNAYN

There are many fascinating aspects of life in Egypt which could be introduced to give flavor to the ensuing events. However, it is impossible to detail them here. Energetic Keepers are referred to *Badeker's Guide to Egypt* which was a tourist guide to Egypt printed in the late twenties and recently reprinted. It contains excellent descriptions of the cities, customs, travel and living arrangements, and the ruins of Egypt. This book can be found at most public libraries. Keepers with less time for research will have to content themselves with memories of movies (such as *Raiders of the Lost Ark* or *The Mummy*) and stereotypes.

From here on, the Keeper should generally cause the investigators to be harassed by local Egyptians in almost everything they try to do. Flocks of beggars should follow them. Hawkers of every sort should vend their goods, forcing them upon the investigators and demanding payment, or whining and showing pictures of starving children. If the investigators had thought to bring along firearms, these will be confiscated by the government until they can get a license for use of firearms in Egypt (this process will take a good bureaucratic month, and the guns might be lost in the interim). The only way to avoid having the weapons confiscated is to have had the foresight to have applied for the license before their arrival at Alexandria.

Egyptian money is the Pound, of 100 piastres, which was then worth about 3 dollars (each piastre worth about 3 cents). As a general principle, locally produced goods and services will cost around ½ the price of similar goods in the USA, but the asking price (before bargaining) will be twice the USA price. Investigators who forget to bargain, or bar-

gain poorly, can thus be victimized by raptorial street vendors. European standard things (meals hotels, clothes, imported goods) will generally cost 1 and 1/3 times more than the USA price, and little bargaining will be allowed. A brief itinerary for the hapless adventurers follows.

At Alexandria

The investigators will be harassed by local Egyptian officials when they try to debark. As a general principle, all official functions need a bribe. The clerks, etc, will demand twice as much as the investigators offer for any service, but will settle for half the offer if the investigators bargain well (using Oratory, barter skills, etc.) Usually, a bribe of at least a few pounds is necessary for any higher-class clerk, and more for officials. Mere soldiers and secretaries can be bought off for only a few piastres. The investigators, naturally, will not know what the going "baksheesh" rates are, and will probably spend much more than necessary. This trend should be encouraged by the Keeper. Once the investigators have passed through customs they will enter into a large plaza filled with horse-drawn carriages and screaming drivers, offering to take them anywhere. In the plaza they will be met by a well-dressed Egyptian, who will call them by name.

He will introduce himself as Mikhay'el Sufyani, and will ask where Butrus is. He will be noticeably shocked at being told he is dead, and he will tell the following story. He will say that Butrus wired from the ship informing Mikhay'el of his arrival, and giving the names and descriptions of his American companions, and telling him of the need for immediate assistance. Mikhay'el thus hurried to aid them, and to inform them that they should set out immediately for Ashmunayn where the exorcism can take place.

(Keeper's Note: In reality, Mikhay'el Sufyani is none other then Khalid Abd al-Azi posing under a false name as a Coptic monk in order to gain the confidence of the investigators.)

Mikhay'el Sufyani (Khalid al-Azi)

STR 15 CON 15 SIZ 13
INT 17 POW 18 DEX 15
CHA 17 EDU 10 SAN 0

SKILLS: English 60%, Arabic 80%, Coptic 50%, Ancient Egyptian 100%, Archaeology 75%, Cthulhu Mythos 80%, History 50%, Occult 70%, Hide 75%, Move Quietly 50%, Bargain 45%, Fast Talk 60%, Oratory 60%

SPELLS: Summon Hunting Horror; Bind Hunting Horror; Contact Ghoul; Contact Sand Dweller; Contact Nyarlathotep; Dread Curse of Azathoth; Powder of Ibn Ghazi; Voorish Sign; Call Azathoth; Summon Fire Vampire; Bind Fire Vampire

Khalid's SAN is at 0, but he is still capable of functioning perfectly well in normal society, except where his diabolic activities are concerned. When alone, or in the company of other cultists, Khalid will let his true self out.

If the investigators go with Mikhay'el/Khalid, he will have them move as swiftly as possible to Ashmunayn, where he has a large number of followers. If the investigators wish to stop at the Cairo Museum first, he will permit them to do so, but will tell them they are wasting time. However, if they ask to be taken to the monastery of St. Pakomios (Butrus' Coptic monastery, and the center for anti-cultist activity) he will absolutely refuse, saying that to do so would lead cultist spies to the secret center of anti-cultist resistance. *(Keeper's Note: the investigators should be prevented from going to the monastery of St. Pakomios in this scenario. One reason that they can be given for not going there is that to go there and then return to Ashmunayn to remove the curse would take so much time that the accursed would be lost before they could get back to Ashmunayn. There are no train lines to St. Pakomios.)*

As the investigators take a horse-drawn cab to head directly to Ashmunayn or Cairo, they will encounter another Egyptian. He will say that his name is Muhammed, and that he is an excellent dragoman (essentially, this means 'guide'). Mikhay'el will try to dismiss him without further ado, claiming they don't need a dragoman — Mikhay'el can provide all the assistance and guiging himself. Muhammed will then argue that he can provide a number of extra services that such a gentleman as Mikhay'el would not deign to perform, such as shopping, moving things, buying tickets, and making arrangements for hotels and restaurants. Muhammed will be persuasive, but the decision to hire is up to the investigators. His price is 2 Egyptian Pounds per day.

Muhammed

STR 12 CON 10 SIZ 12
INT 13 POW 7 DEX 17
CHA 15 EDU 5 SAN 45

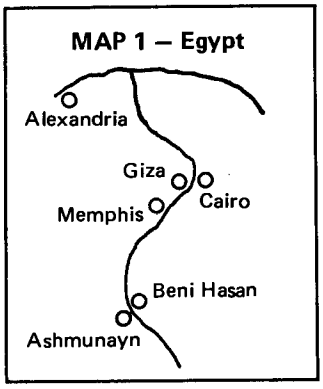
SKILLS: English 80%, French 75%, German 60%, Arabic 80%, Archaeology 15%, History 15%, Spot Hidden 50%, Drive Horse-drawn Carriage 60%, Pick Pocket 60%, Bargain 90%, Fast Talk 90%, Oratory 75%

He would be useful to have around, but his presence is not necessary to the scenario. He can provide assistance and advice whenever the investigators are at a loss as to what to do, where to go, etc. He can also serve as a translator which will come in very handy when the investigators find out who Mikhay'el really is. Finally, he can help the party fend off beggars, vendors, and he can tell them what bribes will be necessary ahead of time.

At Cairo

If the investigators decide to visit Cairo during the scenario, or even in future scenarios, there are a number of things to do.

The National Museum If the investigators show interest in doing research, they will be directed to the National Museum, where there is a large collection of Egyptian antiquities and a well-stocked library. Each day the investigators search through the museum, they are allowed a Library Use roll if they search the library, or a roll equal to their Archaeology skill if they search the Museum's antiquities. Of course, since the accursed's visions are increasing in number, each day at the museum is another day closer to completely losing the mind of the accursed. Following are several useful items of information that can be found in the museum's library.



Information on Ashmunayn The current city of Ashmunayn is located within a few yards of the ruins of the ancient Egyptian city and cult center of Hermopolis (as the Greeks called it) or Khemennu (as the Egyptians called it). In antiquity it was one of the great centers of learning (Plato and Pythagoras, among others, studied there). The city of Khemennu was sacred to the god Thoth (which is a Hellenized form of the Egyptian name Tehuti).

Thoth was known as "the counter of the stars," and "the self-created one to whom none hath given birth." He is associated with the Greek god Hermes, and is known in Egyptian mythology as both messenger of the gods, and god of knowledge and writing. He is also the figure referred to by classical writers as "thrice great Hermes" = greek "Hermes trismegistos" and the latin "Hermes ter maximus." Later medieval and renaissance magicians and wizards looked to this particular Hermes (or, in other words, Thoth) as the father of all magical knowledge. The *Corpus Hermeticorm* equals *The Works of Hermes* was an important collection of magical texts compiled about the second century AD which were used as the basis for many of the magical grimoires of the middle ages and renaissance. This collection of texts purports to be the actual writings of Hermes/Thoth passed down in secret for centuries.

Sacred Animals There were two symbolic animals sacred to Thoth, the ibis and the baboon. The ibis is a small white bird with a long neck and a long pointed beak which resides in great numbers in Egypt. Even today it is considered a lucky animal by farmers because it subsists mainly on insects which might otherwise destroy the farmers' crops. The other animal sacred to Thoth is the "dog--headed ape" or baboon. It is thought that Thoth was often incarnate in the form of a baboon. The baboon's custom of braying or reacting to the moon was taken to be the baboon talking to Thoth, whose celestial symbol was the moon. (Keepers wishing more information on Thoth and other Egyptian deities should consult E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (Dover 1969 reprint of a 1904 edition) volume 1, pp 400ff).

(Keeper's Note: there are a number of parallels between the Egyptian concept of Thoth and the Lovecraftian deity Nyarlathotep. Thoth is the messenger, the mind and heart of Ra, head of the Egyptian gods. Likewise, Nyarlathotep is the messenger, heart, and soul of the Outer Gods. The celestial symbol of Thoth was the moon, and Nyarlathotep frequently howls at the moon — also, what better symbol for Nyarlathotep than the dead, grinning moon, eternally mocking the earth's short life? Finally, Thoth was an Egyptian god, and Nyarlathotep is always associated with Egypt. His

human form is that of a swarthy Egyptian. According to the premise of this scenario, in antiquity, the Outer Gods established various cult centers in ancient Egypt, but over the years, these foul forms of worship and their evil priests were kicked out, and the gods evolved in the minds of their worshipers into the much more benign Egyptian forms known today. However, the old worship continued – in secret during the times of enlightened Pharaohs and priests; more openly during corrupt and evil times. One of the centers of the old evil ways was at ancient Khemennus, where, in the form of Thoth worship, Nyarlathotep's cultists managed to dominate the region for centuries. The cultists which the investigators now oppose are the spiritual descendants of the original folk who once worshiped Thoth/Nyarlathotep thousands of years ago in the ancient temples of Khemennu. This history is not well known, and the investigators should only be able to find it out through diligent searching over a period of several months, or by speaking to Dr. Alfredo Monteverdi in the museum, or Abba Shanuda later.)

The Statue from Ashmunayn
This statue has the form of a standing man, with his hands displayed palms outward. Wild leopards are licking his palms. He has a peculiar mocking smile and is gazing straight ahead. The detail of the statue is remarkable, almost photographic in the manner in which it has captured the man's expression and features. If the investigators spend some time searching through the artifacts on display at the National Museum, they may come upon this object. If an investigator searches specifically for items coming from Ashmunayn, he must make a Luck roll, and an Archaeology roll to find this statue and notice its uniqueness. Anyone noticing this statue will also notice the following information about it: it is dated from the Second Dynasty (2890-2686 BC) and was found near the temple of Thoth in Ashmunayn. It is of exquisite workmanship and is preserved extraordinarily well for a statue of such age. Any investigator making either a POWx1 or a Cthulhu Mythos roll successfully while near the statue will feel something extremely evil about it. Other than this, nothing makes it significant.

(Keeper's Note: this statue can have great importance at a later time, when the investigators meet Nyarlathotep himself posing as a human in the future course of the scenario.)

Doctore Alfredo Monteverdi is a world-famed Italian Egyptologist. He is in his late sixties, short, stout, with wispy white hair, a white goatee, and thick dusty spectacles. Each day that the investigators remain in the National Museum, they have a chance equal to ½ the Luck roll of the luckiest member of the party of meeting Dr. Monteverdi.

Dr. Alfredo Monteverdi

STR 10	**CON 9**	**SIZ 11**
INT 18	**POW 10**	**DEX 13**
CHA 7	**EDU 21**	**SAN 75**

SKILLS: English 75%, Ancient Egyptian 80%, Italian 100%, German 60%, French 85%, Anthropology 65%, Archaeology 90%, Cthulhu Mythos 25%, History 70%

Dr. Monteverdi corresponded with Dr. von Petersdorf before the latter's death, and collaborated with him on his book, *The Antiquity of the Egyptian Religion*. If the investigators meet the Doctore, they can ask him questions, and he will be capable of accurately answering most of their questions about the dagger, the hieroglyphics, and the Thoth/Nyarlathotep connection. However, he will not be able to go to Ashmunayn with the investigators, as he has pressing engagements in Cairo. Although he is able to answer almost any question related to Egyptology, and can speculate upon the connections of the Cthulhu Mythos to ancient Egypt, he knows nothing about current activities of cultists in Ashmunayn (or anywhere else). He thinks that the gods of the Cthulhu Mythos are no longer worshiped, though there is evidence for some sort of worldwide cult in ancient times. He would be properly shocked and horrified by evidence that such a cult continues to exist, and may well deny the evidence of his own eyes in such a case.

AT ASHMUNAYN

From Cairo to Ashmunayn the trip should be by rail, and take less than a day. The investigators will arrive without incident unless the Keeper wants to spice things up by adding a little something of his own.

In the City

The investigators should go to Ashmunayn and take a room at the local hotel. This is a shabby place, as there are few foreign visitors in the place. The local hotel owner is overjoyed to see the investigators and will treat them like royalty, but he will also assume that they can pay like royalty as well. He will brush away beggars and others who might 'bother' the Effendis. If the investigators wish, they can hire a local guide, or if they have already hired Muhammed, he will still be with them. Mikhay'el will still claim that the need for anyone else is illusory, as he himself can guide them perfectly well.

When one of the investigators is out wandering around the town possibly attempting the impossible task of finding a good restaurant) and Mikhay'el is not with him, he will be accosted by a beggar in tattered rags who speaks perfect Oxford English.

This beggar is Abba (Father) Shanuda in disguise. Abba Shanuda is a Coptic priest in league with the monks of St. Pakomios' monastery in their age-old battle against the sinister minions of Nyarlathotep. He was educated in England:

Abba Shanuda

STR 13	**CON 14**	**SIZ 14**
INT 17	**POW 17**	**DEX 15**
CHA 13	**EDU 18**	**SAN 70**

SKILLS: English 90%, Arabic 85%, Coptic 90%, Ancient Egyptian 75%, Archaeology 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, History 40%, Library Use 75%, Camouflage 50%, Bargain 50%, Debate 40%, Psychoanalyze 70%, Psychology 60%

SPELLS: Summon Dimensional Shambler; Contact Ghoul; Elder Sign; Contact Flying Polyp; Enchant Dagger (this last spell can make a matrix capable of summoning a Dimensional Shambler, and also capable of acting as a magic weapon vs. monsters from the void. The dagger must be made of silver.)

Abba Shanuda will relate the following tale to the investigator he has contacted: "I am no beggar and I do not wish your money. My name is Father Shanuda and I am a friend of Butrus. The man you are with, no matter what name he goes by, is not one of our Order, but is, on the contrary, the head of the Evil Ones, Khalid Abd al-Azi. He has lured you here for the sole purpose of trapping you and your friends, killing, torturing, or worse, sacrificing you to his blasphemous god and then stealing the dagger. I have followed you and your companions since your arrival in Egypt, but I have not contacted you to lull Khalid into a sense of security. I cannot emphasize enough that you and your friends are in the greatest danger. Khalid would kill you all without hesitation if he felt it would serve his criminal purposes. If you ever wish to leave Ashmunayn, you must follow my instructions explicitly."

The investigator must now decide how to respond to Abba Shanuda's words. If he doesn't realize it himself, the Keeper should point out the fact that it is possible that Abba Shanuda himself is the cultist, and may be trying to lure the party into a trap. From now on, it is up to the players and the Keeper as to how the scenario will go. The following ideas give a background for the rest of the scenario.

Local Authorities It may be that the investigators will attempt to get help from the local police. In Ashmunayn is a Egyptian police sergeant with four patrolmen under him. In the larger nearby town of Mellawi is a British Lieutenant with more Egyptian officers. It will be quite difficult to convince any of these men that any supernatural hanky-panky has been going on. They will only enter the scenario actively if some crime, such as robbery or murder is committed. One of the Egyptian patrolmen in Ashmunayn is secretly a cultist, and if the police are summoned, he will do his best to be assigned to the case. The police officers' characters can be rolled up if necessary.

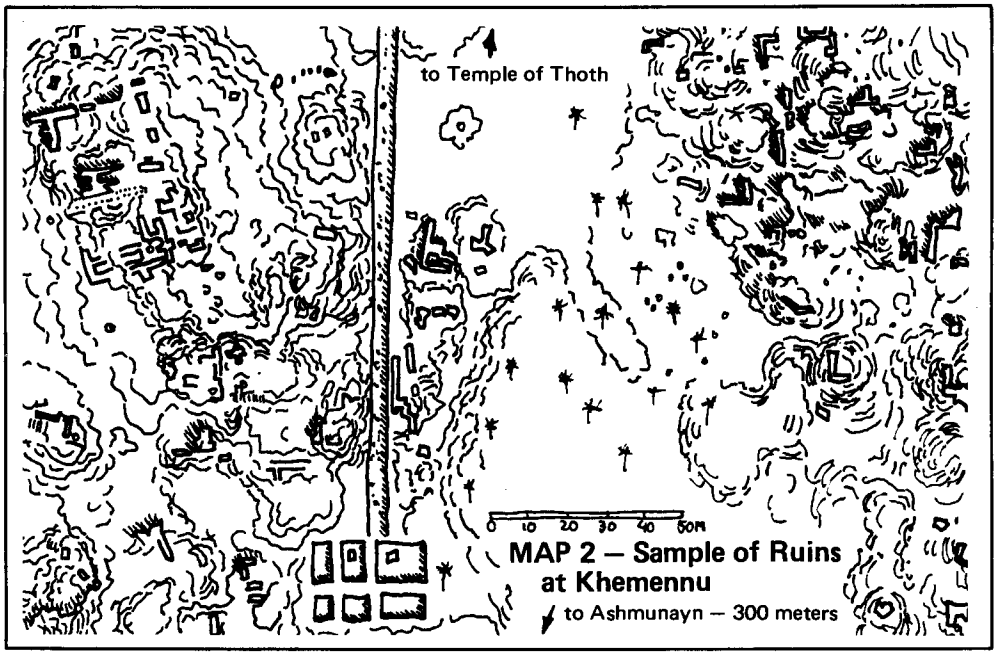
Abba Shanuda's Plan

If the investigator decides to trust Abba Shanuda, his plan is that the investigators should summon Mikhay'el/Khalid to their room, with all present. Abba Shanuda will hide in a side room. When Mikhay'el is there, they will bind and gag him as quickly as possible.

If the investigators decide to do this, Mikhay'el will naturally struggle, and the investigators may even fail to subdue him. When the investigators have gagged and bound Khalid, then Abba Shanuda will come into the room and tell the investigators that it is time for the second part of the plan. He will ask for Thoth's Dagger. If he is lent it, he will then perform the spell of Summon Dimensional Shambler, using Thoth's Dagger. When the Shambler materializes, Abba Shanuda will flourish the dagger, and the monster will obey him, constrained by the dagger's power. All investigators and non-player-characters, including Shanuda himself, must make Sanity rolls. Abba Shanuda will then command the Shambler to carry the horrified Khalid off into dimensional chaos, which it will then do. All is not necessarily well

now, for even if the Shambler succeeds, Khalid will mentally contact Nyarlathotep himself, and call him to come and save him. Also, the investigators might well have questions as to whether they have allied themselves with the right man at this point, after seeing what he is able to do with the dagger.

After Khalid is dispatched, Abba Shanuda will take the investigators along into the ruins of Khemennu that night to destroy the dagger and end the curse. There he will contact one or more of the ghouls dwelling there, using his Contact Ghoul spell. The ghouls will be compelled by the power of the dagger to lead the party to the temple of Nyarlathotep. The ghouls speak only debased Arabic, so that, aside from Abba Shanuda, the investigators might have trouble communicating with them without a translator. The ghouls will lead the investigators to the secret door in the temple of Thoth and descend with them into the catacombs. When the ghouls appear, the investigators, including Abba Shanuda, will have to make appropriate Sanity rolls. As the party creeps through the catacombs, there is a good chance that other ghouls living therein will try to stop them. The investigators may have to fight their way in.



MAP 2 — Sample of Ruins at Khemennu

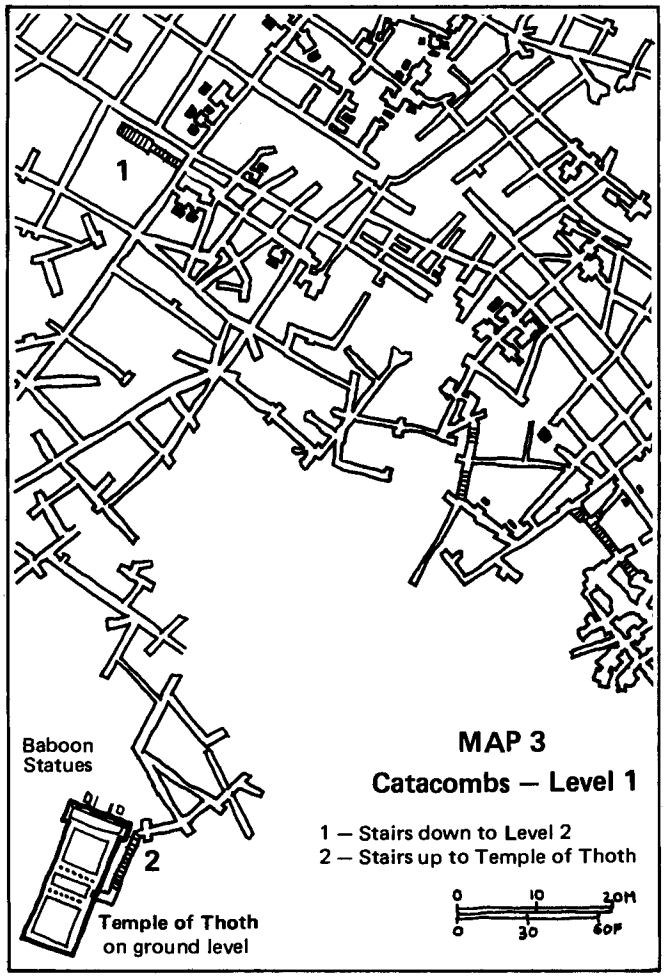
Khalid's Plan

If the investigators do not join Abba Shanuda, but decide to stick with Khalid, Khalid will lead them to the ruins and into the catacombs. He will then lead them around inside the catacombs until they are thoroughly lost, and Khalid is convinced that the investigators are incapable of finding their way out again. He will then summon the ghouls dwelling therein and command them to take the investigators. If the ghouls succeed in overpowering the investigators, all the surviving investigators will be taken to the temple of Nyarlathotep, imprisoned, and later sacrificed one by one to Nyarlathotep.

If the investigators try to join Abba Shanuda and capture Khalid, he will attempt to escape. If he fails, he will mentally summon Nyarlathotep. After he is carried off by the Shambler, Nyarlathotep will arrive in his human form and attempt to regain the dagger and /or destroy the investigators. Nyarlathotep is fully aware of the dagger's power to send him back to the outer dimensions, so he will not risk an immediate assault. He will appear in Ashmunayn as an Egyptian peasant and trail the investigators in his human form. The investigators may try a Spot Hidden to notice their tracker. If one of the investigators saw the statue of Nyarlathotep in the National Museum, and makes an Idea roll, he will recognize the resemblance, and wonder who the man could be. Nyarlathotep will try to steal the dagger.

If the investigators fail to capture Khalid, but go to the ruins and catacombs (either with or without Abba Shanuda, Khalid will summon Sand Dwellers to try and stop them. These will come out of the desert on the side of the Nile Valley and stalk the investigators, possibly coming into the city of Ashmunayn at night and waiting for the investigators among the ruins.

Seeing a Sand Dweller forces a viewer to make a SAN roll successfully or lose 1D6 pts of SAN.



MAP 3

Catacombs — Level 1

SAND DWELLER ONE

POW 8 DEX 13	
Armor/Hit Pts	3/17
Claw Attack (x2)	35%
Damage Done	2D6

SKILLS: Hide in Cover 70%, Spot Hidden 60%

SAND DWELLER TWO

POW 7 DEX 14	
Armor/Hit Pts	3/13
Claw Attack (x2)	45%
Damage Done	2D6

SKILLS: Hide in Cover 30%, Spot Hidden 40%

SAND DWELLER THREE

POW 8 DEX 8	
Armor/Hit Pts	3/17
Claw Attack (x2)	45%
Damage Done	1D6

SKILLS: Hide in Cover 60%, Spot Hidden 70%

SAND DWELLER FOUR

POW 3 DEX 14	
Armor/Hit Pts	3/16
Claw Attack (x2)	35%
Damage Done	2D6

SKILLS: Hide in Cover 65%, Spot Hidden 55%

The Ruins of Khemennu (Hermopolis)

The ruins are north of the city, and at the time the investi-

maps and plans by Yurek Chodak

gators are there, they had not yet been excavated (the excavations took place 1930-1939). Map 2 is based on maps drawn by the excavation teams. The ruins look like a series of knolls and hillets, but are in reality all ruined buildings. The investigators will not themselves necessarily know which ruin is what or where to go.

If they are alone (neither Shanuda nor Khalid with them) they will have to rely on the memory of the accursed to guide them to the place they want to go. If the accursed has reached vision 6, he can lead them to the temple of Thoth in the ruins. If he has reached vision 7, he can guide them to the secret panel in the temple ruins. If he has had vision 8, he can guide them through the catacombs beneath the temple of Thoth, to some extent. If he has reached vision 9, he can lead them directly to the temple of Nyarlathotep at the bottom of the catacombs.

Although the accursed has been here in the catacombs before in spirit, he could still make an error. Every turn that the accursed is trying to lead the investigators through the catacombs, he must make an Idea roll. If he fails it, then he will lead the group astray. The Keeper will be guiding the investigators, of course, stating that a certain path is the way the accursed investigator remembers they ought to go. When the investigators get off on the wrong track, the first turn thereafter, the accursed can try an Idea roll. If he makes it, he will realize he went wrong some time ago. If he fails it, he can try again until he finally makes it several turns later.

If they are with Shanuda, he will summon a ghoul to guide them. Even in this situation, the accursed will recognize the area and will be able to help guide the party in and out.

If they are with Khalid, he will know perfectly well how to guide them. He will attempt to guide the investigators to the point where they will be captured by ghouls and cultists. The final hope the investigators will have is that the accursed could recognize that Khalid is leading them astray, and if he makes an Idea roll, he will know with perfect certainty that Khalid is doing so (if the accursed has reached this point in the visions by now). When Khalid protests that this is the right passage, the investigators could realize that perhaps Mikhay'el/Khalid may not be telling them the truth.

The Catacombs

The catacombs themselves are dank musty dark corridors in which aeons of the dead have been entombed. There are numerous wall niches holding moldered corpses and mummies. Dwelling here is also a goodly assortment of living beings: rats, snakes, egyptian tomb bats, scorpions, and so forth. Some of these creatures have grown unnaturally large, possibly due to the unhealthy proximity to the altar of Nyarlathotep. The characters should be tantalized by hints of this. Perhaps they get a glimpse of a red-eyed rat two feet long scuttling around a corner, or a scorpion as big as a lobster. The snakes here include desert adders and cobras. The Keeper should have the party assaulted every now and then by these grisly underground denizens, to keep them on their toes, to add to the horror, and to emphasize the difficulty of traversing these horrid tunnels. There are several pitfalls and caveins in the tunnels as well. The Keeper can throw these in as desired. They may be handy to set up a dramatic situation: a large pack of bloated, enormous, deformed rats could chase the investigators into a tunnel which turns out to be blocked by rubble — a dead end. These tunnels are under the water level during high Nile, and are extremely moldy and dank. The tunnels are preserved from being deluged only by aeons-old magical reinforcements.

Ghouls: There are a number of ghouls inhabiting various parts of the catacombs. The area marked 'Ghouls' on map 4 is the region where they are most numerous and, indeed, have their 'living' quarters. They wander about everywhere in the catacombs, however. They will usually obey the commands of high-ranking cultists, and are sometimes used as guards by the cultists. The accursed will be able to recognize a ghoul as resembling the statue he saw in vision 6 or the guard he saw in vision 8. The Keeper can have the ghouls appear at intervals. One way to randomly determine when ghouls are encountered is for the Keeper to roll a D6 each turn. If a 1 is rolled, ghouls are encountered. On the upper level, a single ghoul will appear the first time the result is obtained. The second time, two ghouls will show up, and so forth. On the lower level, the ghouls will start out with 1D6 ghouls, then 2D6, then 3D6, and so on.

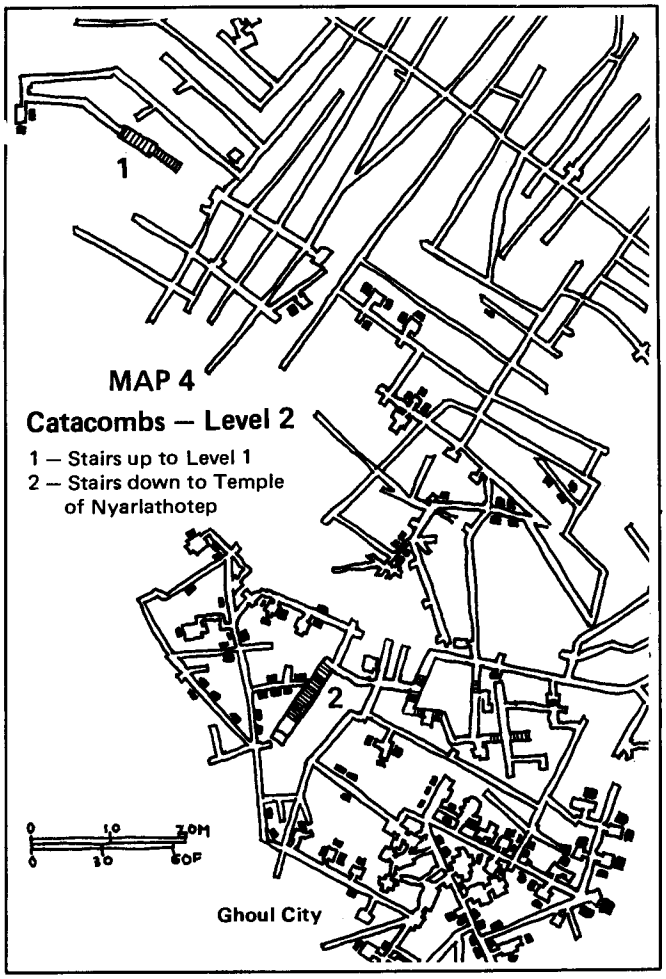
The ghouls may not attack into strong light, or if they are outnumbered by the investigators. If Thoth's Dagger is displayed, the ghouls will be cowed, and refrain from attacking. Meeting ghouls in the dim light of the catacombs will, naturally enough, cause investigators to risk Sanity. Make a normal SAN check every time ghouls are met. A failure causes a loss of 1D6 points of SAN, and a successful roll loses no SAN. However, the most Sanity that can be lost through seeing ghouls in a single night is 6 points. After 6 points have been lost, no more Sanity can be lost through ghouls alone that night. If the investigators are hardy enough to penetrate the caverns a second night, they can again lose Sanity. *(Keeper's Note: Using Thoth's Dagger is the ideal way for the investigators to foil Khalid's plan to entrap them. When Khalid calls the ghouls to capture the investigators, the investigators should brandish the dagger, and force the ghouls to flee. The investigators can then take Khalid themselves.)*

The walk through the catacombs should not turn into a monster-fighting free for all, but should rather be a matter of seeing grotesque figures and scuttling Things in the shadows, and the fear of lurking terrors beyond the next corner.

Ghouls can attack three times each melee round, twice with claws and once with a bite. If a bite hits, the ghoul will hang onto its prey with its jaws. On each subsequent round, the ghoul can automatically hit its prey, biting again for normal damage. When the ghoul is attached to its prey in this manner, both will fall to the ground and roll about. While the ghoul remains attached, it can continue to claw its victim. Both ghoul and prey have +20% to hit each other while thus entangled. As previously stated, the bite will automatically hit. A ghoul can be dislodged on any round that a character who is not attacking rolls a successful STR vs STR resistance against the ghoul. Firearms do only half normal damage to a ghoul.

GHOUL ONE

POW 12 DEX 12	STR 19
Hit Points	13
Bite Attack	35%
Damage Done	2D6
Claw Attack	35%
Damage Done	2D6
SKILL: Hide 65%	



MAP 4

Catacombs — Level 2

1 — Stairs up to Level 1
2 — Stairs down to Temple of Nyarlathotep

GHOUL TWO

POW 8	DEX 11	STR 20
Hit Points		12
Bite Attack		40%
Damage Done		2D6
Claw Attack		35%
Damage Done		2D6

SKILL: Hide 55%

GHOUL THREE

POW 9	DEX 11	STR 16
Hit Points		12
Bite Attack		25%
Damage Done		2D6
Claw Attack		25%
Damage Done		2D6

SKILL: Hide 65%

GHOUL FOUR

POW 13	DEX 12	STR 14
Hit Points		14
Bite Attack		45%
Damage Done		2D6
Claw Attack		55%
Damage Done		2D6

SKILL: Hide 60%

GHOUL FIVE

POW 15	DEX 15	STR 18
Hit Points		14
Bite Attack		35%
Damage Done		2D6
Claw Attack		35%
Damage Done		2D6

SKILL: Hide 50%

GHOUL SIX

POW 13	DEX 16	STR 15
Hit Points		13
Bite Attack		30%
Damage Done		1D6
Claw Attack		45%
Damage Done		1D6

SKILL: Hide 60%

GHOUL SEVEN

POW 18	DEX 18	STR 24
Hit Points		18
Bite Attack		95%
Damage Done		3D6
Claw Attack		95%
Damage Done		3D6

SKILL: Hide 95%

Nyarlathotep's Temple

The temple itself is a fairly simple affair. At the time the investigators arrive there are no ceremonies going on and the temple will be deserted (ceremonies are held but once monthly, at the full moon.) At the far end of the temple is the altar and statue of the Crawling Chaos, in the form of a black sphinx with a smooth, featureless oval instead of a face. This sphinx is carved with various unappealing figures, and the faceless form seems to watch the investigators at all times. The investigators must lose 1D3 points of Sanity for seeing the altar and statue the first time. On subsequent visits, they need lose no Sanity.

If Nyarlathotep has not yet met the investigators, he will appear to them when they arrive in his temple. He will show up in human form (and will be recognizable to any investigator who saw his statue in the Cairo National Museum). He will thank the investigators (in Oxford English) for coming so far to return his property, and request the dagger. He smoothly promises safe conduct out of the temple for the investigators. If the investigators are so craven as to give the dagger back, they will, indeed be allowed to go in peace, all but the accursed. The soul of the accursed "is already mine."

If Abba Shanuda is present, he will cringe in fear when he first sees Nyarlathotep. However, he will take the dagger from whomever is carrying it and attack Nyarlathotep with it. As soon as he is assaulted, Nyarlathotep will begin to balloon outward, his hands will turn into horrible jointed clawlike structures, and his head will swell and distort. Seeing this transformation will cost 1D20 Sanity points to anyone failing a Sanity roll (1D3 otherwise). If the investigators remain for longer than three or four combat rounds, Nyarlathotep will finish his transformation, and the investigators will have to make another Sanity roll or lose 1D100 Sanity. Even a successful roll will cost 1D10 Sanity. If Shanuda can hit the deity with the Dagger of Thoth, Nyarlathotep will begin to shrink and wither until nothing is left but a stench so foul all the investigators must make CONx5 rolls on D100 or collapse in a swoon. They will not be able to awaken for at least six hours. Nyarlathotep will now not be able to return to this world until the next full moon. It is possible for an investigator to try to defeat Nyarlathotep with the dagger himself. Whoever strikes (and thus manages to dispell) Nyarlathotep with the dagger will gain 1D100 Sanity through this partial defeat of the deity. Anyone watching this defeat will gain 1D10 points of Sanity.

Nyarlathotep will, of course, defend himself. Each round, he may do one of three things to slaughter the player-characters. First, he could attack physically. He will only do this in monstrous form. If he hits, he will do 10D6 points of damage. He will usually attack twice per round, and each attack will have a 85% chance of hitting. Those attacked can, of course, try a Dodge roll if they are not insane. A successful Dodge roll will avoid the attack. Someone that is Dodging cannot attack Nyarlathotep. Since Nyarlathotep will not be fully transformed into monstrous form for at least 4 melee rounds, he will not attack physically for the first few rounds. His second attack consists of web-like strands of energy. Glaring eyes and open grinning mouths are visible within the blast, which is sickly green. This attack spins rapidly out of Nyarlathotep's form and into the chosen target, who will take damage equal to the points of Power Nyarlathotep expends. In this case, Nyarlathotep will spend 20 points of POW per attack. He has 100 points of POW, so he will only use this method of attack 4 times. The individual attacked can try a Dodge roll if he makes no normal attack. Because of the speed of the energy blast, the character's chances to Dodge are halved. Nyarlathotep's final combat tactic in this underground chamber will be to expend a single point of Power and summon a Servitor of the Outer Gods. These servitors will seem to roll in through cracks in the air. They will fight for Nyarlathotep and will remain after Nyarlathotep has been dispelled. Hitting them with Thoth's Dagger will dispel them as well. The Keeper should use whatever tactic is best for Nyarlathotep and seems best suited for keeping him safe from being struck by the Dagger.

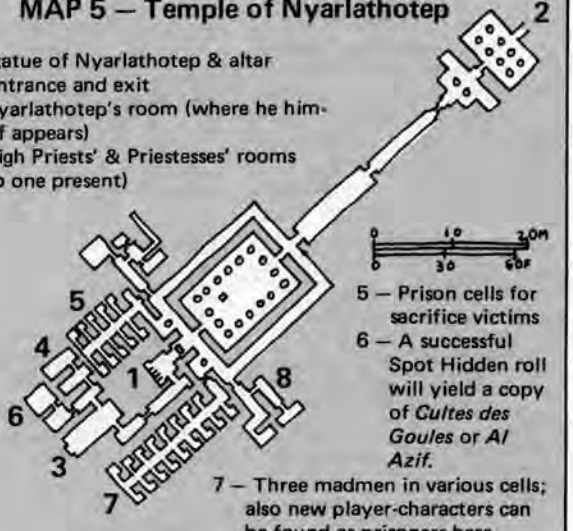
If Nyarlathotep is finally dispelled, the investigators can attempt to dispel the curse of Thoth's Dagger. To do so will require a complex ritual chant and march, which will include the permanent loss of a point of POW from the accursed, and from at least 2 other members of the party. Then, a working Elder Sign must be carved on the altar (which will require both knowledge of this sign and 2 points of permanent Power from the engraver), and the dagger must be plunged into the center of the sign. The dagger itself will then fuse into the rock. The Elder Sign both permits the fusion, and blocks off its mystic powers. Once this is accomplished, the curse's effects will end, though residual Sanity loss will remain.

The investigators must now return through the perils of the catacombs to the outside world. This trip back through the catacombs may be more dangerous than the original trip, now that the cultists have been alerted of the presence of the investigators by the noise of Nyarlathotep's battle. Shanuda, if still with the group, will offer to take the investigators to the monastery at St. Pakomios, where they can retreat into meditation and contemplation. Each month spent at St. Pakomios will increase each guest's SAN by a single point (up to the maximum allowed).

Kheft-ek ertaw en set
Seba'u Kher
"Thine enemy is given to the fire;
The Evil One hath fallen."

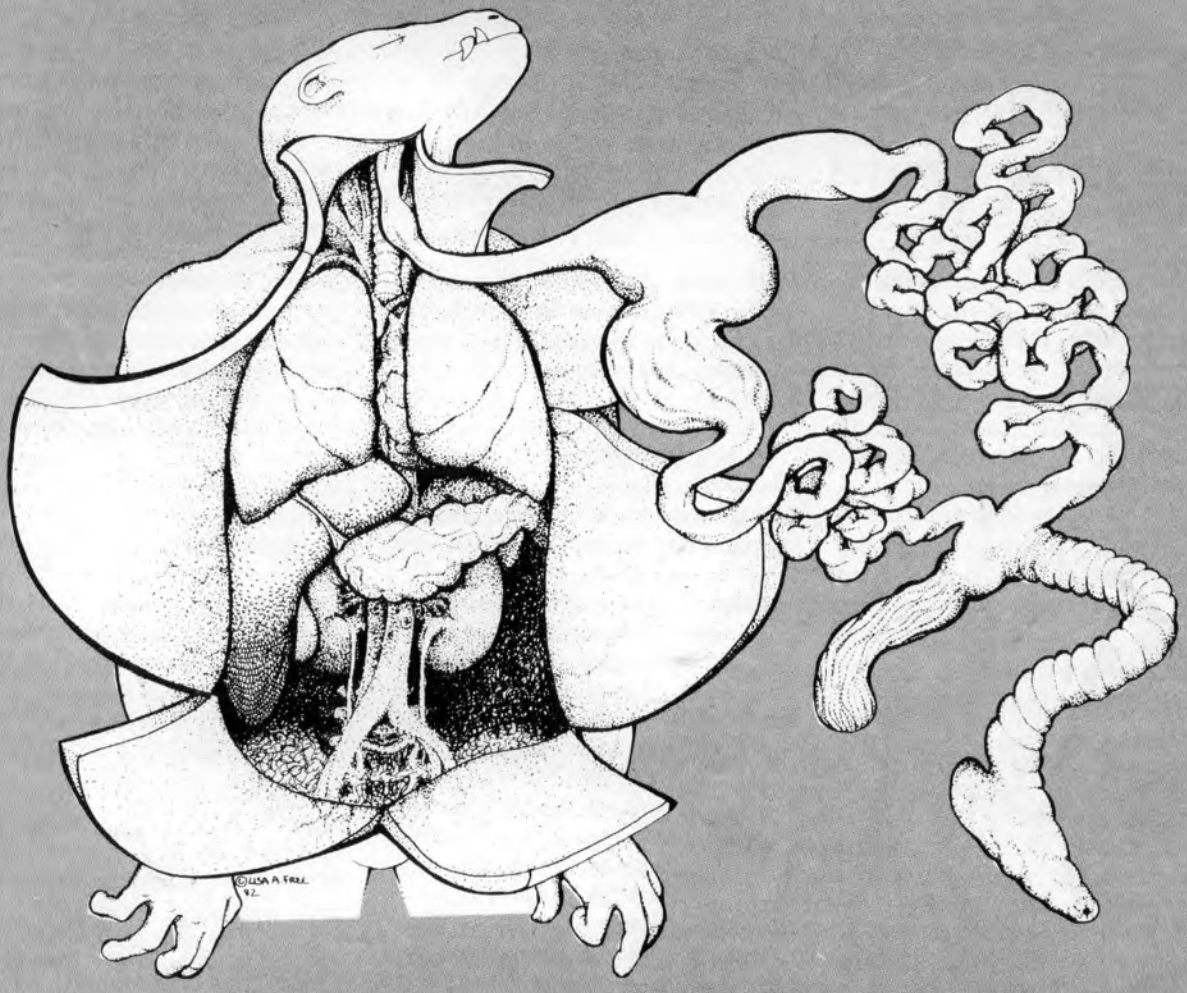
The Egyptian Book of the Dead, ch. 15, 11, 9-10; □

MAP 5 — Temple of Nyarlathotep



1 — Statue of Nyarlathotep & altar
2 — Entrance and exit
3 — Nyarlathotep's room (where he himself appears)
4 — High Priests' & Priestesses' rooms (no one present)
5 — Prison cells for sacrifice victims
6 — A successful Spot Hidden roll will yield a copy of *Cultes des Goules* or *Al Azif.*
7 — Three madmen in various cells; also new player-characters can be found as prisoners here.
8 — A mummy (see *CoC Sourcebook* p 27-28), he can be given 2-3 random spells from Table 6-C in *CoC* p 69, since he was once the high priest of the cultists.

TOTALLY REVEALING!



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In the City of Tenochtitlan, a Man Used to be . . .

DRESSED FOR A FLOWERY DEATH

The introduction of human sacrifice, and the worship of the sun-god were two of the more important cultural and religious influences on the Aztec's way of life. Along with the above topics, this article also discusses the Aztec warrior's weapons, armor, provisions, combat, and ranking system.

By Ernest Hogan

War is an art, not a science
– General Curtis E. LeMay

The colorful spectre of the Aztec warrior – part superhero; part fabulous beast; and part living, killing, and dying work of art, clad in furs and feathers, wielding the deadly *maquahuitl* – haunts the land he once conquered. His image will not die. It surfaces all over modern Mexico, radiating power and pride – on monuments, the murals of Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros, even historical comic books.

regimental leader with banner

He was what every Aztec boy was expected to become. Use of weapons was part of their schooling. At birth their umbilical cords were tied to miniature shields and weapons that their fathers entrusted to soldiers to take and bury on a far-off battlefield. This caused the boy's *tonali* (fate, fortune, destiny) to make him become a warrior, which would earn him a high place in his society, and to cause him to seek a Flowery Death on a distant battlefield, to shed his blood to feed Huitzilopotchli, god who makes the sun rise, the crops grow, and life go on.

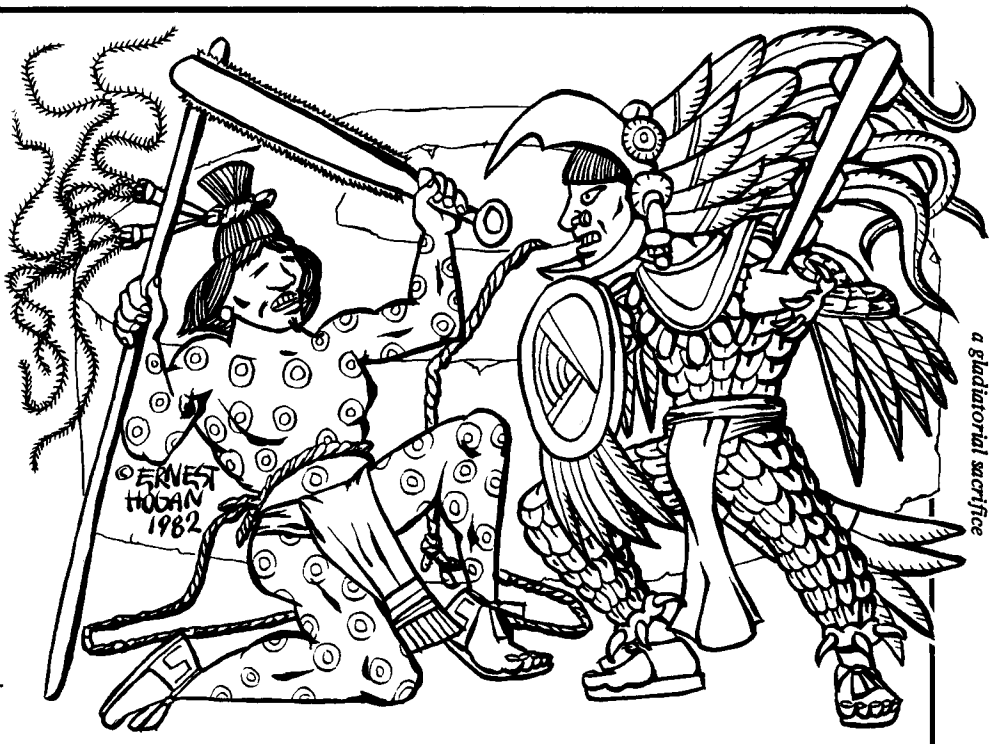
In the summer of 1982, my own *tonali* had drawn me to Mexico to fulfill a dream of exploring pre-Columbian ruins. It was not my will, but that of the gods. A month earlier I had thrown away my life's savings in the deserts of Arizona, where I saw (among other things) strange lights in the sky over the myth-encrusted Superstition Mountains. It wasn't until I got on that 727 that the fact of my trip to Mexico really sank in. I had become a penniless jet-setter flying off to the heart of a foreign land. In Mexico City I found that heart to be the remains of Tenochtitlan: being exposed by surgery as efficient as any Aztec priest's handiwork, and bleeding into the modern world. Down the street from the Palacio Nacional, the Zolaco, and the crumbling National Cathedral, the streets were blocked, the mad traffic somehow circulating around a large archaeological excavation. A *teocalli* (an Aztec temple) was being unearthed. A lost world was slowly coming into focus as the layers of the city cracked and peeled away to create a strange collage of intersecting cultures: inside a Metro station an ancient temple stands where it had been buried for centuries, boldly clashing with its modern surroundings and merging with the day-to-day world of the crowded commuters; 17th century churches built with stones that once comprised native temples now decaying, many closed totally or partially as their leprous stone angels cry out for donations with the blind and crippled beggars, barefood Indian mothers, and starving old women they share the streets with; the mouth of a plumed serpent leers from the corner of a museum whose creation was centuries after its own; Indians in Aztec costume playing music, dancing and passing the hat. At night, in the distant thunder and lightning, the laughter of Aztec warriors can almost be heard.

The Aztec Warrior

"Nothing could be more picturesque than the aspect of these Indian battalions with the naked bodies of the common soldiers gaudily painted, the fantastic helmets of the chiefs glittering with gold and precious stones, and glowing panoplies of featherwork, which decorated their persons. Innumerable spears and darts tipped with points of transparent itztli, or fiery copper, sparkled bright in the morning sun, like phosphoric gleams playing on the surface of a troubled sea . . ."
– from William H. Prescott's classic *The Conquest of Mexico*

Status and soldiering were linked in Aztec culture. The highest places in the afterlife went to fallen warriors. The path of upward mobility was bloody and led right through the battlefield. Captains, directors of schools, tax gatherers, judges, and minor officials all were picked from the ranks of successful warriors. Capturing prisoners was the key to becoming part of the ruling class.

illustrations by Ernest Hogan



a gladiatorial sacrifice

Even tying up one's hair in the top-knot of a warrior was something earned in battle. According to Wilfrid Du Solier in *Ancient Mexican Costume,* "No man or boy was permitted to wear robes with colored figures, jewels, or plumage until he had demonstrated his prowess in war by killing a man or taking a captive. Not even the chiefs were allowed to bind their hair in the style of the braves until they had killed or captured four enemies; the king was not excluded from this custom, he being required to go to war and perform a heroic act in order to merit the crown."

An Aztec dressed in bright colors, feathers, and dripping with jewels was one bad dude, but everyone started at the bottom, as a common *yoaquizque,* not allowed to wear ornaments, carrying a plain shield, clad in a plain *maxtlatl* (the loincloth that was the typical dress of men in pre-Conquest Mexico). If he was lucky, he may have had plain armor of *neguen;* a coarse fabric of aloe threads which according to Gary Jennings in his novel *Aztec* was "uniformly white – until it got uniformly muddy." Eventually a proven warrior would be able to wear a panache of exotic tropical feathers on the back of his head, and adorn his body with paint, a clay stamp, or a colored seal.

Chiefs and principal warriors wore *ichachuipilli*: armor of cotton, woven like chainmail and soaked in brine. This consisted of a tight-fitting corselet and knee-length trousers made in one piece and laced up the back so nothing was left dangling for an enemy to grab. Wealthier warriors would wear theirs decorated with cuirasses of thin gold plate or silver, and spectacular *plumaje* (feather-work) that would identify his rank. According to Prescott "the cotton mail, or *escaupil,* as it was called in Castilian, were so excellent that they were subsequently adopted by the Spaniards, as equally effectual in the way of protection, and superior, in the scope of lightness and convenience, to their own." And after sweating it out in those hot and humid tropical climes, where even the thought of wrapping your body in heat-absorbing metal is enough to send you rushing off to buy an ice-cold *refresco,* I can not only see, but feel the logic of that move.

Lesser captains wore helmets of wood or leather carved into the fantastic shapes of the heads of wild beasts, or even giant skulls, decorated with feather crests and panaches, plus cloth and paper devices. *Iyacs* or "knights" wore helmets representing the animal of their order: Jaguar (or *Ocelotl*) knights had helmets of wood with the skin of a jaguar's head stretched over it and displaying some of the cat's teeth; the Eagle (or *Cuatli*) knights had theirs shaped like eagle's heads; Arrow (or *Mitl*) knights, who were superior marksmen, had ones resembling the heads of lesser birds of prey; and Du Solier even mentions (and shows) a Coyote knight, with a suitable helmet. All this head gear, or *astlaxeli* to use the Nahuatl word, had the wearers looking through the creature's gaping mouth, making him resemble a bizarre, double-headed monster, usually with a colorful panache flowing from the back.

Regimental leaders of city contingents would march into battle with tall banners strapped to their backs with a harness – leaving arms free for the all-important task of killing. These banners were made of feathers of reed and paper over a wooden frame, and ranged from one or more flags topped with feathers to elaborate structures like small-scale parade floats or fantastic birds.

Rank and status could be determined at a glance. The men in the most colorful and elegantly decorated costumes with the most intricate jewelry were the *tlacochcalotls* – the distinguished warriors. Their lip-plugs or *bezotes* worn in their pierced lower lips were in the shapes of plants and animals, sometimes with moving parts; such as a snake with a wiggling tongue. The lower-ranking soldiery had to settle for plain gold discs. The soldiers wore leather gorgets trimmed with seashells and worn around the neck. Only the officers could wear the most colorful shells.

Another distinctive feature of a great warrior. After twenty or more acts of heroism, a soldier was called a *cuachic* and his head was shaved, except for one lock left growing over the left ear. He also wore an embroidered *maxtlatl.*

The hair also provided a clue as to who the not-so-heroic warriors were. If a man fought in three or four campaigns without capturing any prisoners, he was not allowed to cut his pigtail, which then grew long and was the source of name-calling and humiliation.

The Flowery Death

Our god will feed himself with them as though he were eating warm tortillas, soft and tasty, straight out of the oven.

– Tlacaelel

The Aztecs fought wars for the usual reasons – conquest, maintainence of their empire, and even self-defense, but with them, killing the foe was not as important as taking him prisoner. This did not mean the captive would survive and wait out the war as a pri-

a cuachic (great warrior)

soner of war. Prisoners were sought to provide blood sacrifices to the gods, particularly Huitzilopotchli, their sanguinary god of war.

Surprisingly, their notorious human sacrifices were not always part of Aztec life. According to Prescott, the use of human sacrifices wasn't adopted until the 14th century, 200 years before the coming of the Spaniards.

Yet, before the first galleons were sighted off the coast, human sacrifice was a regular occurance. How could this be? It seems to have been largely the work of one man. His name was Tlacaelel.

The mythos of the Aztecs as People of the Sun was largely the creation of Tlacaelel. Early in the 15th century, he helped lead the Aztecs against the tyrant Maxtla of Azcapotzalco, and later became the chief adviser to King Izcoatl. He imposed a new official vision of Aztec culture, rewrote history, and destroyed books that contradicted his ideology. "Clearly," wrote Miguel Leon-Portilla in *Aztec Thought and Culture*, "the later Spanish book-burners had their precursors among the indigenous rulers of Aztec society." Tlacaelel saw his people as having a sacred mission to subdue the nations of the earth to provide flesh and blood to feed the great god Huitzilopotchli, who makes the sun rise.

Of course, there are times when peace did break out, and Huitzilopotchli's hunger still needs to be slaked. Thus the Flowery Wars came about. "And this war should be of such a nature that we do not endeavor to destroy the others totally," said Tlacaelel. "War must always continue, so that each time and whenever we wish our god wishes to eat and feast, we may go there as one goes to market to buy something to eat ..."

Yes, the Flowery Wars were the feasts of the gods, fought for the sole purpose of providing prisoners to be sacrificed. The armies of the Triple Alliance of Mexico, Texcoco, and Azcapotzalco would engage those of Tlaxcala, Cholula, and Uexotzinco in ceremonial combat. When the priests judged that each side had enough captives to satisfy the gods, the war was declared over and everybody went home.

Weapons and Provisions

At the dedication of the great temple of Huitzilopotchli, in 1486, the prisoners, who for some years had been reserved for the purpose, were drawn from all quarters to the capital. They were ranged in files, forming a procession nearly two miles long. The ceremony consumed several days, and seventy thousand captives are said to have perished at the shrine of this terrible deity.

– Prescott

No wonder the warriors dressed so proudly. Flowery Death is what awaited a great many of them as they marched off to the battlefield, sleeping in a *tlamaitl* – a heavy garment for cold weather that was used as a bedroll at night, and eating at midday an *atoli* mush of *pinoli* (ground maize sweetened with honey) and water. At night after the more heavily burdened commissary troops caught up, a more substantial meal of hot food was provided, plus, according to Jennings, "a cup of thick, nutritious, spirit-lifting hot chocolate."

They even had a medicine to prevent cowardice, made of fresh rainwater mixed with white clay, powdered amethyst, leaves of the cannibis plant, flowers of the dogbane, the cacac bush, and the bell orchid. Take one sip the night before battle and be ready to use your weapons in the morning, or accept a Flowery Death!

Their most infamous weapon was the *maquahuitl* – the Aztec "sword," really a two-handed staff about three and a half feet long. It was flattened and along the edges at regular intervals were set blades of *itztli*, known to us as obsidian. The edges were sharper than steel swords and could be used to decapitate a horse, though the cutting edge was easily lost as the volcanic glass broke.

Itztli was also used for the points of spears – *tepustapillis* – along with flint, bone, and simple fire-hardened points. Javelins were thrown with an *atlatl* or spear thrower, a piece of wood one or two feet long with a groove down the center with a peg at the end where the butt of the missile fit; near the end were loop-like finger grips of seashell, and the bottom was usually decorated with a carving. Lances were six to ten feet long with a five-foot obsidian-edged blade. There were also more normal-sized spears with heads of *itztli* or flint.

The bow and arrow was also widely used. Their bow was rarely over five feet long, and the arrows had fire-hardened, obsidian, or flint tips.

Slings of plaited cotton were used to throw stones the size of hen's eggs. These were, according to Du Solier, "the favorite weapon of the Matlatzinca who wore them around their heads when not required."

Not as common were the knob-headed wooden war clubs called *macan* or *cuaohlalli*, or the hatchet that consisted of a copper blade in a thick wooden haft like a truncheon.

For defense against all this, various kinds of *himalli* (shields) were used. A buckler 20 to 30 inches in diameter was made of rods held in place with twisted cotton and decorated with either *plumaje* or leather with with bark-paper backing. Wooden shields were decorated with inlaid gold or turquoise mosaic. The common soldiers carried plain shields, captains had personal emblems and insignia on theirs, and those of the commanders' were decorated with a personal hieroglyph or the name of their people. Also used was a larger shield that protected the entire body and could be rolled up and put away when not needed.

Armies were divided into units of 8,000 men and companies of three or four hundred (each of which had its own commander) and squads of twenty. Prescott wrote that, "they advanced singing, and shouting their war-cries, briskly charging the enemy, as rapidly retreating, and making use of ambuscades, sudden surprises, and the light skirmish of guerrilla warfare."

In the process, warriors were captured. This meant eventual sacrifice. The Flowery Death was considered an honor. Sometimes the Flowery Death came through gladiatorial sacrifice, which allied a soldier to die as he lived – fighting. He was tethered to a huge round stone in the town's main square, given dummy weapons (four wooden balls, four pinewood cudgels, and a *maquahuitl* edged with downy feathers instead of *itztli* – the kind used in training young boys) and would have to fight four *iyacs* in succession. If by some miracle he managed to defeat them, a fifth, left-handed warrior would be brought in to finish the job.

A Flowery Death could also come on the altar at the hands of a priest who would cut open the chest with an obsidian blade, then present the still-beating heart to Huitzilopotchli.

After death, the victim was eaten, feeding man as well as god. Surprisingly, a warrior never ate the flesh of his own captive. In combat with the defeat, the warrior and captive were considered to have taken on a blood relationship, often calling each other "father" and "son." To eat your own flesh and blood was considered incestuous.

Conclusion

There is nothing like death in war,
nothing like the flowery death
so precious to Him who gives life;
far off I see it: my heart yearns for it!

– an unknown Aztec poet

Of course, the Aztec way of life is no more. The wizards of Huitzilopotchli drove Quetzalcoatl off to sail a skiff woven of serpents to the fabled land of Tlapallan. When it was thought he had come back, the visitors turned out to be Cortes and the Conquistadors instead. Soon the Aztec empire and all its civilization received a Flowery Death. No more flowery wars, no more human sacrifices. Lost forever are the subtle details of the philosophies of the *tlamatinime* – the wise men who believed that "it may be that so one speaks the truth on earth," that reality is a transitory dream – with their belief that the truth can only be known through the "flower and song" of poetry, metaphor, and other leaps of the imagination.

This is all so strange, like scenes of life on another planet, or the wild visions of a twisted fantasy writer or demented game designer, that it is hard to believe that four centuries ago it was all not only real, but alive. But I've been there. A saw the excavations and artifacts in the bustling center of Mexico City. I walked the ancient streets of Teotihuacan. I climbed, sometimes using all fours like a monkey, stopping to rest at each level, to the top of the magnificent Pyramid of the Sun (when I first saw it, I thought it was a mountain). There at that dizzying height, sharing the thin air of seemingly Himalayan winds with tourists from all over the globe, I looked down at the dead city and saw that it was all quite real, solid, and monumental. It could probably withstand a nuclear attack.

Now, I'm back home in the middle of "civilization," writing what my *tonali* dictates. I keep waking up in the middle of th enight, as if from the presence of Aztec ghosts, thinking I'm still in Mexico. My perceptions have been altered; we have our MX missiles, neutron bombs, plans for limited nuclear wars and first strike capabilities. The evening news religiously reports to us in living color Flowery Deaths from all over the planet, at dinner time, and a cannibalistic public hungrily consumes it all. And folk who think themselves rational say that this bloodshed is worthwhile; a necessity; as if it were all to come to a screeching, totally irrational halt one night, if these "sacrifices" were not made ... the sun would not rise in the morning.

What would Tlacaelel think of it? Is the god Huitzilopotchli alive and well fed today?

My *tonali* now makes me want to get up, put on my blood-red Aztec T-shirt and Panama hat and strut the streets as I wonder .. No civilization lasts forever. Thousands of years from now, as the archaeologists dig through the rubble of Earth's past, who would they think was best dressed for their Flowery Death? The Aztecs, or us?

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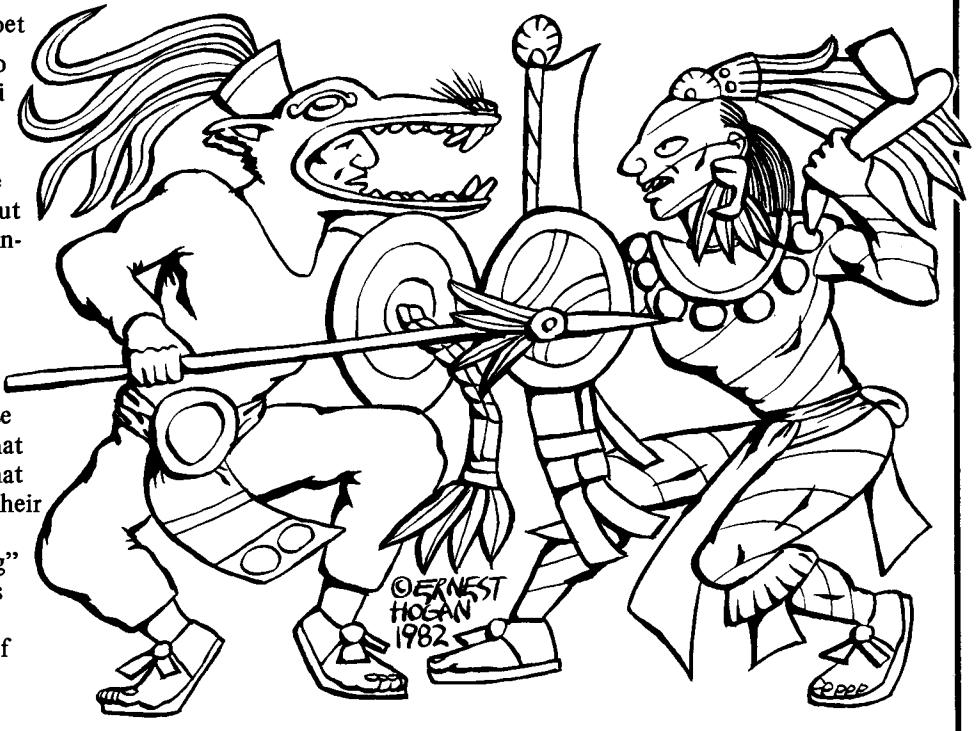


Books & Role-Playing

The King Arthur Companion, **by Phyllis Ann Karr, 1983, Reston Publishing Co, 174 pp., clothbound, $15.95 tent.**

Reviewed by Bill Johnson

This book is the stuff of legend. *The King Arthur Companion* by Phyllis Ann Karr is a compendium of the people, places and things that are the sum and substance of that romantic era, when Arthur was King and Camelot was the center of the universe.

Not a new version of the well told story, but a comprehensive reference source, this book will serve well in its title role, a companion for those people who enjoy stories of that other, special time of magic and chivalry. For that matter, anyone who is interested in the medieval, knighthood, magic, or basic background for romantic tales or role-playing scenarios will find here a wealth of ready information.

The *Companion* is divided into three major sections. The first and largest section, "People," consists of alphabetical entries of the incredible cast of characters involved in the stories of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. These entries include information about the character's part in the tapestry the stories weave. Many contain portions of translations from the original texts which add their own color to the material. For many entries, particularly regarding kings, a list is provided of their family, retainers, and allies. Full page genealogies of Pellinore's, Lancelot's and Arthur's kin are included.

The second section, "Places," describes in a similar way the familiar and lesser known castles, abbeys, kingdoms, forests, and magical places of Arthur's time. From Abblasoure to York, these are the locations where the stories unfolded. Here is the Green Chapel, the Fountain of the Silver Pipe, the Isle of Avalon, Merlin's Rock and enough castles to please any turret-and-spire lover.

The third section's alphabetical entries describe ". . . tools, obstacles, prizes, quest objects, and so on, that entered the lives of Arthurian people." Titled "Things," this section is extremely broad in its scope. Available here are descriptions of the arms and armor of the knights of old, the important weapons, shields, rings, potions, horns, and, yes, the Holy Grail. General entries include gloves, letters, money, ships, and wine.

The *Companion* also contains entertaining short essays on a host of subjects from knighthood and errantry to battlefield pillagers. The appendages also provide further illumination. A "Tentative Cronology" is presented, followed by a listing and description of 34 magical acts of Merlin and other magicians. Finally, of particular delight to the role-player, but also useful for other intents, is a section of character groupings. This includes bards, damsels, kings, giants, knights, lovers and villains with information general to the class and lists of entries in the "People" section that fit in these general categories.

The book also includes two maps, one of King Arthur's Britain, the other of his continental campaign. I like maps, and the map of King Arthur's Britain is excellent. I would prefer it closer to the "Places" section as a more handy reference for these entries. Also, an unobtrusive grid system with map references included in the entries would have been appreciated.

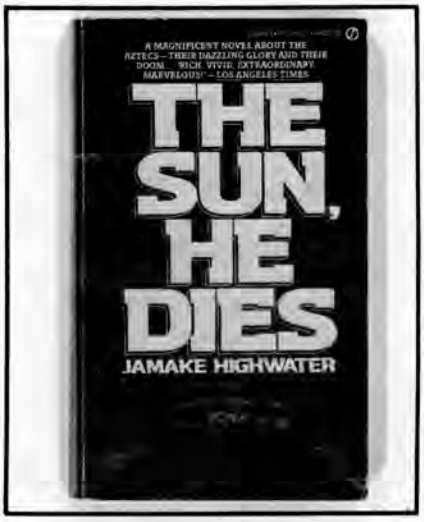
Also included is a bibliographical note, which, unlike most other bibliographies, is very readable and provides an insight into the authoress' fondness for this subject, if it were not already apparent from the work itself.

I do not like reading dictionaries. I will admit the dictionary appearance of this work put me off at first, but only briefly. This does present some minor difficulties but the book is so well cross-referenced and the table of contents so well done that this book's usefulness is obvious. The authoress refers to this work as a "handbook" and I like that term. It implies accessible information. It is her obvious love of this subject and open discussion style of writing that make this book a companion.

Criticism of the *Companion* is difficult at best, due to the noticeable honesty with which it was written. The authoress' comments, such as ". . . I have more or less treated Malory and the Vulgate as if they were quasi-historical documents, but I have tried to do so in consciousness that the legend has room for countless other versions and interpretations," and, "these notes do not pretend to perfect objectivity," pretty well disarm any debate. That is, of course, if the abundant but unobtrusive references have not already done so.

I do wish there were more illustrations. I am particularly bent towards illustrations (I need breaks when reading) but even that minor complaint is thwarted by the Beardsley initial plates. Those marvelous drawings only encouraged me to move further along the alphabetical entries. But this handbook can be read by more than the alphabetical method. I found myself reading an entry and then reading the entries concerning characters, places, things mentioned in the first entry, and then the second, and the third . . . Just looking up the major people and things I recall from the legends provided another way of enjoying this reference.

The King Arthur Companion is an incredibly entertaining and useful work. It holds a wealth of information about an earlier time both real and imagined. As intriguing as the tales it describes, the *Companion* will find a place close at hand to any lover of Arthurian lore whether novice or expert. □


A MAGNIFICENT NOVEL ABOUT THE AZTECS – THEIR DAZZLING GLORY AND THEIR DOOM. RICH, VIVID, EXTRAORDINARY, MARVELOUS!" – LOS ANGELES TIMES
THE SUN, HE DIES
JAMAKE HIGHWATER

Aztec, **by Gary Jennings, Avon, 1038pp., $3.95.**

The Sun, He Dies, **by Jamake Highwater, Signet, $2.95.**

Reviewed by Ernest Hogan

The most fantastic, wonder-inspiring novel of a strange exotic world to come out in years is not a fantasy. I'm raving about Gary Jennings' monumental *Aztec,* the story of the life of an Aztec named Mixtli as he tells it to Spanish priests in an effort to record a fading picture of a conquered, dying world. In the book the lost world of pre-Columbian Mexico, and the glory and horrors of the Aztec empire come to life in colorful illumination and meticulously researched detail making the novel a virtual Encyclopedia Azteca in fictional form.

But there were more worlds than one in Mexico then, and Mixtli sees them all. In the plot, he is advised to "Go to far places, meet new people, eat exotic foods, enjoy all varieties of women, look on unfamiliar landscapes, see new things." From the deserts of the wandering tribes of the north, to the decadent world of the fallen Maya, the jungles of the south, and a journey to find the legendary land of Aztlan – the original homeland of the Aztecs.

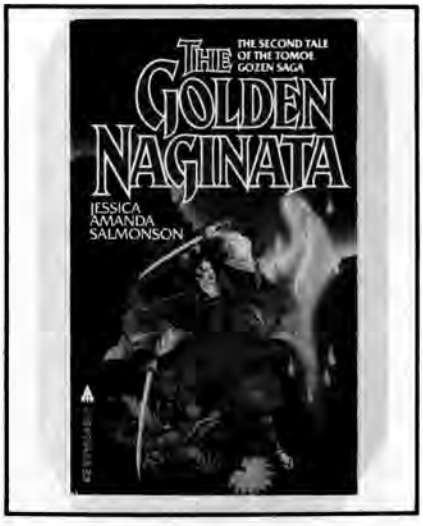
This is not a massive travelogue. Rather, it's full of characters, conflicts, plots, counterplots, and adventures that will keep you turning pages from Mixtli's birth to the eventual doom of his entire world with the coming of the Spaniards.

If you are interested in more Mesoamerican fiction, there's also Jamake Highwater's

The Sun, He Dies, which offers a different view of life in the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan and the conquest by the Spaniards. Highwater, who is of Blackfoot-Cherokee heritage, presents us with "a reality that seems to have escaped the experience of non-Indians." Far more than in *Aztec,* which is basically in the tradition of the modern historical novel, *The Sun, He Dies* reads like fantasy.

Highwater's narrator, Nanautzin sees the world differently from Jenning's Mixtli. Myth, dream and reality merge, apparitions appear before the coming of the Spaniards: an eclipse, a comet, the discovery of a monstrous bird and two-headed, deformed beings that are brought to Montezuma — and disappear, are all of a different, fantastic reality. The Spaniards and all they bring with them are grotesque, alien monsters. Montezuma's fears become clearer — these bizarre beings may be gods, but if they aren't gods, they certainly can't be men. The resultant reading has the effect of the finest fantasy.

Yet, according to Highwater in his afterword, all these things "are not products of a lavish imagination but the products of the vision of a people whose experience is fundamentally different from that of the white man's civilization." It is a vision that will teach you things about magic and reality that will cause your own imagination to burn brighter, and make your fantasies more fantastic and real. □



Tomoe Gozen, **Ace, 1981, $2.50;** *The Golden Naginata,* **Ace, 1982, $2.75, both by Jessica Amanda Salmonson, illustrated by Wendy Adrian Shultz.**

Reviewed by David R. Dunham

Although I had seen games like *Land of the Rising Sun* and *Bushido,* role-playing in mythical Japan was something of an abstract concept for me until I read Jessica Salmonson's Tomoe Gozen stories. These books (two so far) are set in Naipon, an island empire on an alternate Earth, where the monsters and magic of Japanese legend are as real and dangerous as the samurai's sword.

Tomoe Gozen is about a samurai, who falls under the spell of a Chinese sorcerer, fights her way out of Hell, is befriended by a jono (ninja magician), and offends and is cursed by a bakemono (ogre).

In *The Golden Naginata,* Tomoe is at it again, fighting her way out of an arranged marriage, offending a tengu (long nosed demon), avenging the ghost of her sword's maker, meeting a fortune-teller followed by a red oni devil, and much more.

The action is plentiful, and sometimes harsh, but there are occasional tender scenes. The setting is exotic and somewhat alien to a Westerner, but Salmonson makes it seem natural. The supernatural and the mundane blend together to make a believable world. Tomoe Gozen is a superlative swordswoman (perhaps the best fighter in Naipon), but she has her flaws. Her individualism is a source of recurring conflicts, since Naipon places concern for duty and honor above concern for self. Several times, Tomoe can only attain her objective by battling herself.

The ideas in these books obviously are most useful to those playing in a Japanese campaign, but below are some that I liked.

The Chinese sorcerer has fire-breathing warriors ("dragonmasters") in his army, and he summons demons who are capable of replacing lost heads or limbs with those chopped from humans or horses.

Dreams are often of great significance. Tomoe and a Buddhist nun share a dream in which they battle demons. The fortune-teller travels in her sleep, threatening waking people. Tomoe sometimes has dreams which direct her course of action.

Magicians can build doors opening onto invisible paths, which lead through darkness to other places. The distance goes by much more quickly along these paths.

Blessed red beans can ward off supernatural beings, especially when thrown by a priestess.

I enjoyed reading the Tomoe Gozen books, and look forward to the next. They give the flavor of medieval Japan. The illustrations are attractive and complement the text. There are scenarios galore, and plenty of ideas for a japanese campaign, many of which could be used in any setting. ■

GAME CONS

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1006 11th St
Denver, CO 80204

COAST CON '83 March 4-6, 1983
Royal D'Iberville, Biloxi, MS
Coastcon '83
Box 1423
Biloxi, MS 39533

GENCON SOUTH VI March 11-13, 1983
Thunderbird Resort Hotel, Jacksonville FL
TSR Hobbies Inc
PO Box 756
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

FIRSTCON March 12-13, 1983
Arlington Heights, IL
Mark Mulkins
Games Plus
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University of Akron, OH
Neo-Con II Committee
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Akron, OH 44321

FANTASY WORLDS FESTIVAL
March 18-20, 1983
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Lisa Waters
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Berkeley, CA 94701

SCIENCE FICTION WEEKEND
March 31-April 1-3, 1983
Grisworld's Inn, Fullerton, CA
Science Fiction Weekend
c/o Fantasy Publishing Co., Inc
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Alhambra, CA 91801

OSCON '83 April 16-17, 1983
Oklahoma State University, OK
OSU Wargamers
700 West Scott No. 321
Stillwater, OK 74074

TRISTATE CON '83
April 29-30, May 1, 1983
Cincinnati Tech College, OH
Cincinnati Adventure Gamers
11020 Reading Rd, Suite 175
Sharonville, OH 45241

CWICON '83 May 20-22, 1983
The Odeum, Villa Paral, IL
Chicago War Gaming Inc.
PO Box 217
Tinley Park, IL 60477

DALLCON '83 June 4-6, 1983
Dunfey Hotel Dallas, Dallas, TX
Dallcon '83
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Denver Gamers Association
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Littleton, CO 80161

POLYCON June 24-26, 1983
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TEXCON '83 July 2-4, 1983
David Ladyman
Texcon 1983
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Austin, TX 78753

ORIGINS 1983/MICHICON 12
July 14-17, 1983
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Metro Detroit Gamers
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Troy, MI 48098 □

REVIEWS

SWORDBEARER
DAREDEVILS □ SOLOQUEST
TRAIL OF THE SKY RAIDERS
HOTEL COMPLEX

SWORDBEARER

By Dennis Sustare and
Arnold Hendrick
Heritage USA
$10.00
Reviewed by Ken Rolston

Swordbearer is a new fantasy role-playing rules system. The package consists of 119 pages of text in three booklets and a character sheet. The print is small but quite legible; the material contained is substantial, intelligent, and well-written. If a continuum of FRP rules were to be established with *Tunnels & Trolls* at the simplest end and *Chivalry & Sorcery* at the complex end, *Swordbearer* falls somewhere near *RuneQuest* on the *Chivalry & Sorcery* end of the scales. The rules are more comprehensive than *RuneQuest's* and the magic and economics of *Swordbearer* are somewhat more self-consistent and medieval in tone and mood.

The character generation system produces characters with rich and detailed backgrounds. There are numerous choices that permit customizing the character according to the special skills and knowledge that a player wants. *Swordbearer* emphasizes the realistic and human side of characters rather than the heroic side; age and experience determine the skills and abilities of a character. Characters must have some way to make a living or some means of support, and the game is designed to facilitate the extended campaign where the activities of the characters between sessions are as important as the infrequent adventuring they do. There are no character classes; however, a character may specialize in one or two spheres of knowledge — for example, fighting, crafts, knowledge, or magic. Within these spheres of specialization are many specific skills a player may elect for.

A character's social status is all-important in *Swordbearer*. There is no money in *Swordbearer:* a character is permitted to have anything that is appropriate to his social status. If he has more than that, he is under suspicion of having stolen it. In addition to simplifying the rules, I find it more in the spirit of Western medieval culture than the endless chests of copper, silver, and gold pieces migrating from location to location in other games.

The combat system is fairly involved. It is not fast-and-dirty, like *D&D* or *T&T,* nor is it as involved as *Chivalry & Sorcery*. It is probably a little faster than *RuneQuest*, which is not to say that it moves quickly and simply. The detail does not seem to be aimed at creating a realistic simulation of combat; rather, it seems to attempt to capture only the relevent dramatic aspects of combat. There is room for tactical maneuvering, and the speed and type of movement you select affects the other actions you may choose. Defense skills are of supreme importance, and a character may improve in weapon speed as well as in percentage chance to hit (hitting first is an important defensive skill). Wounds are serious; healing is scarce and slow, characters are fairly frail to begin with, and permanent side effects from injuries are not uncommon. Wounds are divided into four general types — cut, thrust, smash, and burn — and each has its own proper treatment. The system is potentially just as deadly as *RuneQuest,* except that a character is disabled or unconscious more quickly. In *RuneQuest,* folks somtimes keep on swinging after they've been badly hurt; in *Swordbearer* the similarly-hurt character is down and out and doesn't have the option of killing himself by continuing to fight. Also, there's no Divine Intervention or Resurrection here; dead is dead. As I said, the rules tend to be realistic and unheroic. Such a system tends to de-emphasize the childish style of conflicts supported by some other games (Gee, I wonder how many dragons I'll be able to kill?) and emphasizes the more realistic dramatic elements (Gee, how am I going to stay alive?).

The magic system has atmosphere and flavor. Magic is scarce and relatively weak. Combat magic is particularly limited. The technology of magic that is the rationale for the game rules speaks in terms of "domination of elements" and "attuning nodes of power"; it has a mystical and appealing feel to it. The referee is in complete control of the amount of magic available in the game. A mage must search the world over to find the nodes that power the magic, providing a useful excuse to push the players out on adventure, and the referee controls the amount of magic available by controlling the amount of nodes that appear in the environment. The designers recommend that players begin without using the magic system, which is probably a good idea for any FRP game, and they suggest gradually phasing in the more powerful form of magic in *Swordbearer* (spirit magic) only after the players are familiar with the game. The spells that are available are rather limited, and there is no explicit provision for adding or researching new spells. This is a defect; many of the spells that exist are of relatively little practical value, and many more common types of spells are missing completely. I personally prefer low-powered worlds, but here is more a case of poor variety and limited utility of spells.

The section on races and beasts is useful but unremarkable. There are several new creatures along with the usual menagerie. Animals are handled well, with suggestions on their typical behavior and habitats. The background information given on the intelligent races is very sparse, though some clues are given to the personality and psychology of the race rather than simply elaborating on the awesome damage an individual sample might wreak on a player-character.

The final section, and the tour-de-force, is the Gamemaster's Guide. This is filled with practical and sensible advice on setting up and maintaining a campaign. Many a novice gamer's debacle could have been prevented by reading this tome of wisdom. A gamemaster's duties, a player's duties, designing an adventure, time scales, battles, campaigns, and other topics are covered with the sweet voice of reason and experience. My favorite feature is the section on Maps and Travel, which contains a handy classification system for regional terrain and a guide marking important features on maps. There is also an excellent chart which will tell at a glance how far a character could travel in an hour through certain types of terrain. This is easily adaptable to any system.

What does *Swordbearer* lack? It doesn't have a clerical system — no gods or related

magics. It has no established world, such as *RuneQuest's* Glorantha or *Stormbringer's* Young Kingdoms; the referee will have to design his culture all by himself. There are currently no published scenarios using the system; there isn't even a small example in the rules. It has no stiff binding. In fact, it doesn't really have a binding at all; there are three stapled booklets, and the "cover" for each is the same thickness paper as the other pages of the booklet. It does not have a pretty cover. The cover art is somewhat unimpressive, unfortunately, because the black-and-white artwork inside is of average to superior quality.

Swordbearer is a well-written, well-designed game system. Does it have a market? At its comparative low price, it is an excellent bargain if bought just as a supplement to another game system; many of its concepts and features can be adapted to any campaign. It is a good system in its own right, but folks are generally reluctant to casually abandon their hard-won familiarity with their current set of rules, and they often have a lot of time invested in the materials they have developed. *Swordbearer* is a good system for a beginner, but it lacks the aggressive marketing push necessary to enable it to compete with giants like *D&D* and *RuneQuest*.

If Heritage were to publish some first-class support materials for *Swordbearer* — some well-written scenarios, particularly — gamers might begin to consider adopting *Swordbearer* as their campaign system. Unless there is some evidence that the publisher is going to support the product with the same high quality of supplements as are available for *D&D, RQ,* and *T&T*, it is unlikely that they will risk switching over to the new system, in spite of the obvious qualities of *Swordbearer*. In the meantime, anyone who plays FRP games will find this game well worth the ten dollar price tag. □

DAREDEVILS
By Bob Charrette and Paul Hume
Fantasy Games Unlimited
$18.00
Reviewed by Ken Rolston

Daredevils is a detailed and comprehensive role-playing game for adventure and action set in the Thirties of Doc Savage, Indiana Jones, and Sam Spade. The package contains a 64-page rulesbook, a 32-page scenario booklet, GM screen, character sheet, and dice. It is a complex and sophisticated game requiring considerable effort to comprehend, set up, and play.

The rules are artful but frustratingly complex. The jargon, abbreviations, and unclear language make studying the rules difficult and confusing. They are weakly organized for reference — no index, no text references in the glossary, and no flow charts or diagrams for procedure. The authors might have felt compelled to pack in detail at the expense of smoothness of style, but I found it very unpleasant reading.

There are some clever methods for handling certain actions that are usually poorly covered in FRP rules. The unarmed combat system, for example, is realistic, detailed, and conveys the dramatic flavor of a good brawl. Some more unfamiliar actions are covered with equally creative rules; for example, there is a system for abstractly resolving the complex events of an automobile chase, including factors of driving skill in keeping the car on the road at speed while firing out a window. The complexity of the rules is both a virtue and a defect. They are complex enough to cover typical situations that are potentially difficult to judge consistently, but the procedures are unfortunately often rather involved.

It would take quite a while for anyone to become proficient in game mastering *Daredevils*. All of the other currently-marketed FRP games dealing with modern backgrounds (*Call of Cthulhu, Champions, Villains and Vigilantes, Superworld,* and *Gangbusters,* for example) are less detailed and less comprehensive. *Daredevils*, then, might be perfect for anyone unsatisfied with these other systems, but I believe that most would prefer a game easier to learn and play.

The character generation system is a time-consuming but entertaining form of solitaire play. The completed character has a full background with details of education, occupation, talents, and skills, but the procedure yields a comparatively simple character sheet that is easy to play with. On the other hand, a flow chart of the combat options that must be understood and orchestrated in sequence by the referee would be quite intimidating. A combat turn might take a long time to resolve.

Here's a rough idea of the procedure for resolving a combat turn. There are multiple "situation modifiers" that must be assessed — restrictions on a character's normal movement, distractions of the character's thought, perception, and coordination, and a chart of 45 specific cases which may involve minor computations to arrive at the appropriate adjustments to be made to later figures. Then there are numerous action choices, all of which have distinctly different game effects. (The situation is even more complex when there is a mixture of missile and melee in a single turn.) Then you must adjust for a character's defense skill. Now it's time to total up the character's "adjusted chance of success." The dice are finally rolled. If the attack is successful, then we roll the "damage potential," which is, for example, either a "bullet damage group" or a "strength group" for hand-to-hand combat. If the combat is hand-to-hand, a strength effect must be considered; if the missile is a thrown weapon, there is a different strength factor; if it is a gun attack, another system is used. If the attack is with a gun, first you determine the total "bullet damage group" per round per location, then divide by 10 to yield a factor we'll refer to as "x." The damage is equal to (x)D10 + x rounded to the nearest whole number. Then the location of the hit is determined; if it is a critical hit, there is a separate procedure. Then you compute the armor and/or barrier effect on the possible damage. Now we know what the effect of the action was, unless the action was a missile attack, in which case we now must roll for special effects, like stopping power, flesh wounds, or stunning. More critical effects are also possible at this point.

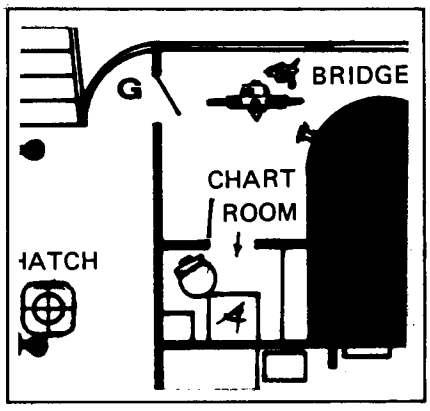
Phew. I'm not stupid. I've read many wargame and FRP game rules. This one was tough going. I realize that the above exposition is hardly fair; I would be casually surprised if it were completely accurate. However, that is the point. I try very hard to be fair in reviews. I worked very hard at understanding the rules for quite a while, and I'm still pretty confused.

These criticisms are leveled mostly at the combat system. On the other hand, if you can avoid combat, *Daredevil's* handling of skills and its unique "task" system make a very simple and entertaining adventure. I playtested one of the scenarios from the package with some friends and had a very good time. Tasks are performed by characters on the basis of their skill, talent, knowledge, task difficulty, and the available resources. This section of the rules is fairly simple and works smoothly; the concept could be easily and profitably applied to most other FRP games.

This game is not for beginners. The authors apparently assumed a sophisticated referee; their introductions suggests that the reader leaves out rules he doesn't like. Beginners would hardly be able to judge. There are few practical suggestions on how to simplify combat: though there are "basic," "advanced," and "optional" rules, there is no streamlined combat resolution system.

The scenario booklet contains four adventures. The first, "Fu Sung's Secret," is a two-page quickie with investigative work and a little potential for combat. "Fu Sung's Revenge" is a more detailed follow-up adventure, full of the dumb death-trap stuff, but presumably good old-fashioned pulp action. "Black Claws" is a full-scale campaign that takes characters to the wilds of Africa. This adventure is involved and detailed, with good characters and a weird but fairly plausible plot, reminiscent of a nice '30's Hollywood action-adventure with undertones of politics, magic, and intrigue. The best of the lot is "On These Mean Streets," an excellent investigative adventure. The background is well-prepared, there is intriguing depth and complexity to the problem, and there is room for character improvisation. It has a credible, almost naturalistic appeal in its atmosphere of low-life crime and corrupted high-society.

My only reservations about these generally fine scenarios are concerning the inherent weaknesses of '30's pulp fiction — implausible plots for heroes and villains in



"exotic" backgrounds. I personally do not find Doc Savage or Indiana Jones very compelling characters, nor am I particularly taken by the plots and settings of those types of adventure — comic book stuff without the mutant powers (though optional rules are included in *Daredevils* for occult powers). That is my personal prejudice; others will probably be tickled to death with Charlie Chan and the like. My preference is for the Nick Charles/Sam Spade/Phillip Marlowe characters, and *Daredevils* will support this sort of detective-style role-playing. Detective fiction is a powerful and vital publishing genre at lesat the equal of science fiction and heroic fantasy, while pulp fiction is a less vital tradition. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* was a flash-in-the-pan; TVs limp copycat *Bring 'Em Back Alive* suggests how weak the genre's resources are. Perhaps supplements supporting the detective-investigation side of *Daredevils* could encourage a larger audience. The best investigation-style adventures de-emphasize gunplay — ideal for avoiding the cumbersome combat rules.

Referees may not play this game enough to become proficient with the rules. This game doesn't seem to have the same campaign potential as FRP and comic-book role-playing, if only because of the deadliness of the combat system.

If you are interested in gaming in the pulp or detective traditions, this is a recommended purchase but read the scenarios first, and play an adventure ignoring the combat system or scaling it down to the basics for the first adventure. Carefully limit the opportunity of combat until you are competent to handle a full-scale fracas. There are many creative ideas in *Daredevils*, and it's a pleasurable evocation of the '30's adventure genres, but the rules are obscure and complex. □

SOLOQUEST
Alan LaVergne
Chaosium Inc.
$8.00
Reviewed by Anders Swenson

Soloquest is the first book of *RuneQuest* adventures published which are intended for solo play. The book is eighty pages long plus cover. There are three short adventures, each with a different format.

The first adventure is called "Dreamquest." The adventure consists of a selection of twenty different opponents — the character must defeat four of them. The adventure is assumed to take place as in a dream, and some of the rules for equipment, weapons, and spell selection differ from standard *RuneQuest* to simulate the dream-state.

The second adventure, "Phony Stones," is a detective puzzle. A sage has determined that a gang of malefactors has taken up residence in a village of ten houses. It is the job of the player, through his character, to determine which of the ten choices of residents in the village are actually the nasty criminals. Of the three adventures, this is the only one which is not re-usable.

The third adventure is a solo dungeon-crawl, in the tradition of many of the *Tunnels and Trolls* adventures which we solo fans have come to love. The "Maguffin Hunt" has the adventurer poking through a labyrinthine cavern searching for a gang of dwarfs who have stolen the Maguffin. There is a standard pattern of search and combat.

Many of you are probably familiar with the format of the solo-adventure. The player moves his character through an adventure which consists of a series of numbered paragraphs or sections. The paragraphs are not read sequentially, but rather the end of one paragraph gives decision-making instructions to determine the next section to be read. Reading the text straight through not only spoils some of the surprises but also gives a meaningless jumble instead of a story.

The first solo adventures were written for *Tunnels and Trolls.* Solo scenarios have been prepared for *D&D,* and *Traveller* although the *Traveller* adventure was simply a scenario for one character, and not a numbered-paragraph-type programmed game.

There are two main types of solo adventures, the hard-keyed type where the matrix of paragraphs maps out the physical ground where an adventure takes place, and the random-keyed format, where the sequence of the adventure attains either a variable, dreamlike quality, or is a series of random encounters in the same area. The "Phoney Stones" adventure uses a new format, and its lack of success probably explains why the format has not been used before.

"Phoney Stones" is a simulation of a face-to-face adventure in solo-adventure terms. The problem must be solved by the player using personal intelligence and wit, rather than the abilities and skills of the player-character. It is similar to the short, two-minute variety of mystery which depends on a subtle inconsistency in the evidence which may not even be perceived depending on the background and viewpoint of the reader. The problem with "Phoney Stones" is that it is in fact too subtle. The player must use the character to elicit an inconsistency from one of the ten residents which would indicate a covering-up of criminal activities. By the time the actual damning evidence is obtained by the player-character so many other confusing and inconsistent facts have been developed that the important point is nearly lost.

The other two adventures are very successful. "Dreamquest" consists of four fights selected at random from a list of twenty. While the individual opponents can be easily defeated, the character may not use any bound spirits to augment his own power reserves and only one short rest may be taken to restore personal POW. There is nothing about the legality of simple stored POW, although this may be assumed to be okay. Even with a fair amount of stored POW, the five fights (there is a standardized ending encounter after the four randomly selected ones) have been more than enough for my characters. The problem is simply one of saving POW — a character is best advised to wear the heaviest armor available for *Soloquest,* just to reduce the amount of Healing needed.

What is a Maguffin? A Maguffin is the unattained goal that keeps an Alfred Hitchcock mystery moving along, and would-be Maguffin Hunters should keep this definition firm in the back of their minds. "The Maguffin Hunt" is the most conservatively designed and probably the most successful of the three adventures. Players who have run a couple of Maguffin hunters should either set the scenarios aside for six months or use a die roll to select between some of the options.

For a first book of solo adventures, *Soloquest* is a great success. Alan LaVergne has demonstrated a good grasp of solo adventure design, and the layout and typography provide an excellent setting for the well-written text. This book is highly recommended for all *RuneQuest* players. □

Reaction

Oakblight is a regenade elf who hates anything that smacks of Aldrya or Aldryami.

If you know Food Song; are an elf; a lay member of Aldrya; or an initiate of Eiritha, Chalana Arroy, or Yelmalio, he will be hostile.

He is neutral to Darkness

THE TRAIL OF THE SKY RAIDERS
J. Andrew Keith
FASA
$6.00
Reviewed by Tony Watson

The Trail of the Sky Raiders is the sequel to *The Legend of the Sky Raiders* reviewed previously in these pages. Like its predecessor, *The Trail of the Sky Raiders*, is an interesting and intriguing adventure and a fine example of what *Traveller* adventures can be, with the application of some imagination and hard work.

The first adventure is not necessary to play this one, though it would be helpful. The author takes a couple of pages to sum up the salient events that transpired in the course of that adventure. *Trail* is set up in such a manner that it can be played by the same player-characters used in *Legend* or by an entirely different group.

The characters are the crew of a type A2 Far Trader, down on their luck and low on cash on the planet Nomael in the Jungleblut subsector (a map of the subsector is provided for reference). There the players encounter an artifact in a bar, an item that very much resembles a piece discovered in the archaeological digs on the planet Mirayn. Mirayn, of course, was the site of the original archaeological find that Professor Jothan Messandi had discovered. The professor was attempting to link items discovered there to the half-legendary culture of interstellar plunderers known as the Sky Raiders. (The professor's expedition and its problems with the notorious smuggler Eneri Kalamanaru form the subject matter of the

first adventure.) Evidence found on Mirayn failed to establish it as the homeworld of the Sky Raiders; indeed, the discoveries made by the two Messandies opened up more questions about this obscure historical race than they answered and the mysteries have piqued the interest of many people. As a possible example of Sky Raider culture, the artifact proffered in the startown bar could be of considerable value to the Institute for System Studies on Alzenei, which now employs Lorain Messandi, the Professor's daughter.

The plot begins to thicken when the characters arrive on Alzenei. The scene of the next phase of the adventure, is thoroughly described, including an illustration and a simple map included on the pull-out sheet. The characters will be able to contact Lorain about their artifact by phone, but when they try to follow up with a visit to the Institute, they will find that she has been kidnaped. The adventure will then enter its most involved segment during which the players will be required to play the roles of futuristic sleuths as they attempt to track down the whereabouts of Lorain. In an eleven-page section the procedure for looking for clues and information is laid out. Time frames and activities are outlined. A complete listing of the pertinent areas of the cities and the rumors to be found there is provided as well as a handy summary for the ref to insure that he is able to negotiate his way through the material and make sure the players pick up on the key information.

What the players learn will eventually put them on the trail of the kidnapers, setting up an action-oriented ending. The conclusion of the adventure once again borrows from the film *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, as the group investigates an archaeological site while enemy troops are in hot pursuit. *The Trail of the Sky Raiders* adds to the sum of knowledge about this mysterious race, but fails to answer all the questions. Everything will be tied up, we are promised, in a third adventure, yet to appear, called *The Fate of the Sky Raiders*.

This is a nicely done adventure, with a well thought out and presented background. The scenes depicted could serve as springboards for further adventures, and the non-player-characters offered should provide ample opportunity for expanded play.

The play aid does have a few drawbacks, chief of which is its high price. At $6 each, the three *Sky Raiders* adventures will cost $18, nearly the price of GDW's *Deluxe Traveller*. The nature of the adventure requires heavy-handed orchestration on the part of the referee. It will require a fair degree of deftness on the ref's part to carry it off smoothly.

The Trail of the Sky Raiders is composed of a fifty-six page booklet and a 17" x11" fold-out page of maps and diagrams. □

STARPORT MODULE ONE: HOTEL COMPLEX

by Jordan Weisman, Ross Babcock, J. Andrew and William H. Keith
FASA
$9.00
Reviewed by Anders Swenson

The *Hotel Complex* module is intended as a ready-made location plan for use with futuristic adventure games such as *Traveller*. The product consists of five 17" by 22" pages printed on both sides with floorplans, and a 5½" x 8½" 16 page book of descriptive text. The plans and booklet are shrink-wrapped inside an 8½ x 22" cardboard sleeve, which may serve to contain the product after opening the plastic if the user is careful not to let the contents spill out the ends.

The plans (all the drawings are plan view diagrams of various hotel facilities) are drawn to a scale usable with 15mm figures. The plans are all ruled into 1.5 meter squares; the walls and other hotel features fit the borders of these squares closely in most instances.

Drawings are presented of ten floor types of this hotel. They are: maintenance and engineering, transportation axis, main lobby, theaters and shops, restaurant, tourist-class rooms, luxury rooms, hotel offices, the Skytop Restaurant, and penthouse. It is intended that some of these floorplans be taken as representative of multiple floors of the hotel which have essentially the same floorplan; there would be several floors of tourist-class rooms, but only one lobby or penthouse. In addition, two plans for secret security room groups are given in the text booklet.

The text booklet serves as a key to some of the floorplans, and gives other information about the hotel. All of the plans except the restaurant and the room plans are described and explained, and the exact location of the security office is described. In addition, the book gives suggestions for random encounters in the hotel area.

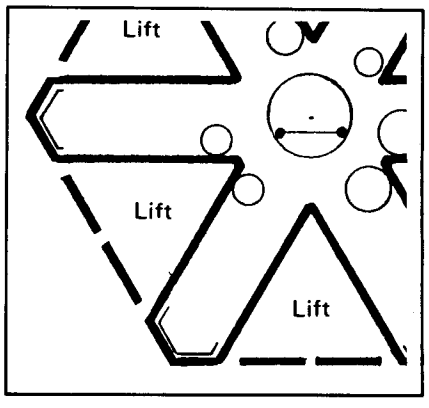
This hotel is supposedly a standardized design which may be found in many different types of locales. The containing jacket shows the hotel in a resort environment and in an urban setting. Other drawings show the hotel in the middle of a jungle, at a spaceport, and in other settings. There is no mention of how many floors make up the hotel, nor of how many types of the various floorplans each hotel contains. For economic soundness, I presume that several each of the tourist class and luxury room floors are present, interspersed with food facilities for all the guests.

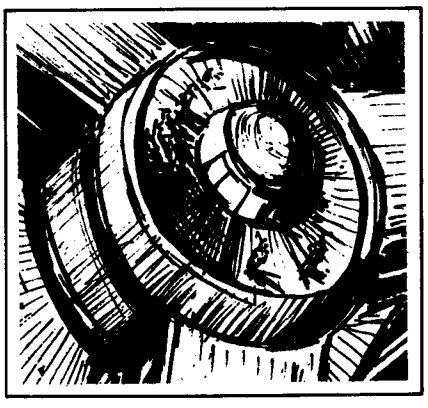
While these plans present an adequate symbolic representation of the various parts of a hotel, and could be adequate for gaming both in 15mm and 25mm figure scales, the plans fail as a representation of a realistic hotel.

To begin with, everything about the design is just too small – no doubt a concession to the draftsman who wanted to fit everything neatly into the format. Possibly, the designers failed to switch mental gears from designing space ships, where scaled-down and sketchy facilities are acceptable and necessary. A hotel must be built to effectively handle large numbers of people and give them an adequate standard of accommodation, and this design fails in several areas to meet this.

To mention several specific problems, the hotel parking lot only holds fifty vehicles, there is only room for one small bed in the regular rooms, and only one double bed in the more expensive ones, there are no closets nor other places for the guests to unpack their bags, there are no places like broom closets for the hotel staff to store cleaning and maintenance equipment or for robots to park themselves, there is no cargo elevator nor any provision for moving furniture or linen or food supplies about the building – much less beds or other large furniture, and the passenger elevator is inconveniently composed of triangular segments which look uncomfortable and are too small for a medium or large party to ascend together in, and the restaurant plans are very poorly done both in numbers of tables (in proportion to the number of hotel guests) and in terms of receiving raw food and moving cooked food to the tables rapidly and without disturbing other guests of the hotel.

This hotel is useful for gamers who want a facility which will provide a setting for interior fights and confrontations. There is no way in which *Hotel Complex* can be described as more than sketchily realistic. ■





Metal Marvels Presents:

Heritage's CONAN Line

By John T. Sapienza, Jr.

Swordbearer is Heritage's new fantasy role-playing game, to which the *World of Conan* set is a supplement. Heritage's primary business has in the past been miniatures, so it is no surprise that their figures for gaming with the Conan rules came out promptly — the surprise is that the figures came out before the rules did. Packaged in blister packs at $4.49 each, the figures were all sculpted by Max Carr. This is a new style for Max, with figures a little smaller than earlier lines, averaging here about 28mm from head to foot, but thinner and with more detail than Max's earlier style.

Pack 5000, the *Conan Collector's Figure,* is the only one out of scale. It stands 57mm from head to foot, which is as comfortably within 54mm scale as a 28mm figure is within 25mm scale, I'd say. A powerful figure of a barbarian with drawn broadsword, it would be fun to paint just for its own sake, but you could also use it as a figure representing a giant compared with 25mm people. The sword and scabbard need to be glued on, which is not difficult.

Pack 5001 is *Conan* himself, in 25mm scale. He appears on foot with sword and shield, charging into combat. Two other figures in the pack represent Conan mounted, and his horse. On horseback, he

is in a similar position, with sword raised to strike, but holds the horse's reins in his left hand. The horse is rearing, with both front hooves off the ground, an attractive action pose. The horse is a little small, but a pony is suitable enough for a barbarian.

Pack 5002 contains four female figures, and will be reviewed in a few months in a special column featuring female miniatures.

Pack 5003 is *Companions of Conan,* four individuals. One is a thief with a patch over one eye, wearing a hooded cloak and carrying a dagger in his right hand. One is a well-equipped barbarian warrior in furs and cloak wearing a plain metal helmet, a dagger and sword at his belt, and an axe and shield in his hands. The remaining two fighters are apparently civilized men, judging from clothing and armor. Both have sword and shield, but each is of a different style, just as helmet and face are individualized.

Pack 5004, *Sorcerers of Hyboria,* contains Conan's most evil opponents, men of arcane knowledge. Two can be considered not too menacing. One wears robes and a three-peaked hat, while the other clutches his wind-tossed robes with his left hand and holds a ball of fire aloft in his right hand — whether as a source of light or a weapon is unclear. Both have flowing hair and long beards. The

other two look more worrisome. One wears a "Ming the Merciless" collar and a tight skullcap hood enclosing all but his face, making his goatee that much more prominent. He holds a magical staff in one hand and gestures with the other, probably readying death for an honest barbarian. The last figure is the most dreadful of all, a faceless wraith with only the eyes visible, standing next to a skullcapped staff.

Pack 5005, *Enemies of Conan,* could easily be confused with Conan's friends by appearance, which only goes to prove that you can't trust looks alone. One is a desert chieftain in robes and headgear, rushing forward to attack with his scimitar. The next is a swashbuckler figure with sword in a dueling pose. (Both could make good scout or thief figures.) The next two are warriors. One stands with sword and shield ready for combat, wearing a metal helmet and greaves, but no other visible armor under his clothing.

The other charges forward with raised battleaxe. He has only helm, shield, and heavy boots for protection. This lack of heavy armor is consistent with Howard's description of Hyboria, in which nobody wore armor unless they were going into battle — and then, only when they could afford it. Good armor was the sign of elite troops.

With pack 5006, we move from individuals to groups, with duplicates of figures in the same pack. The *Thieves of Zamora* contains two copies of a figure that would make a good assassin, holding a dagger ready to stab at waist height and hiding his face with his cloak. The remaining three figures are all of a man pointing forward with his left hand, with a sword raised in his right. He wears a turban, shirt, trousers, and heavy boots. He has a scabbarded dagger at his belt. You could differentiate between members of the group by using different colors when you paint them.

photos by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

Pack 5007, *Pirates of the Red Brotherhood,* contains three types, all in leather armor at best. You get two each of pirates holding scimitars ready for combat in two poses. The fifth figure is the

only one wearing a helmet, and is the leader. He holds a scimitar in his right hand and a club in his left.

Pack 5008, *Mercenaries of Kozak,* contains four types. The leader wears an ornamented open helm which, like the other figures in the pack, has cloth coming out from underneath to protect the ears and neck from the sun. He is well-dressed, in fancy clothing, holds a sword in his right hand, and his shield is slung over his back.

He wears a goatee. The lieutenant is also well-dressed, but has a plain helm. He stands with sword rasied and his shield held protectively. The archer is more plainly dressed, and stands with an arrow in his right hand ready to be loaded and fired on command. The fourth figure is a regular infantryman, and you get two of them. He stands with shield raised, but holds his spear vertically with its butt on the ground. Like all this group, he is uniformed in helm, tunic, boots, and cape.

Pack 5009, *Soldiers of Turan,* are regular troops, since they wear uniforms, but there are but two types. Both come with bow and quiver of arrows across their back and have a curved scabbard at their belt. They wear tunics, boots, baggy trousers, and fancy pointed helmets with neck cloths for protection from the sun.

One holds a round shield in the left hand and a spear upright in his right hand. The other holds his scimitar raised in his right hand and a horn in his left. I wish this pack had included a third type of figure holding the bow ready to fire.

Pack 5010 contains two *Frost Giants,* which stand about 40mm from head to foot. They are dressed viking-style in furs and capes, and furred boots, with no armor and a lot of exposed arm, leg, and chest skin area. One wears a horned helmet and carries a two-handed battleaxe. The other wears a winged chart and carries a one-handed axe. Both wear richly-ornamented belts and armbands.

Pack 5011 contains the sorcerer *Yah Chieng on the Flying Horror.* The sorcerer wears trousers, tunic, cape, and an ornamented cap with downturned horns. He holds a staff carved with a screaming face. His mount is a horse-sized flying reptile resembling a pterodactyl. It's worth buying for the monster alone, which is about 50mm tall, with a 75mm wingspread. □

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Yaquinto Publications

Adventure by Design

GAMEMASTERING TIPS AND SCENARIO DESIGN

by Greg Stafford

Designer, Entertain Thyself

Role-playing games are played for their entertainment value. Entertainment today includes everything which is intended to hold the viewer's attention, whether it has intrinsic value by appealing to your palate, artistic sense, or no value at all, like television advertising.

Role-playing games present a unique method of entertainment wherein the players are active participants rather than passive spectators. An exciting game engages the participants' creative imagination and exercises a part of the brain which has been waiting to be activated and which grows with use. It is fun to be transported to distant realms and other worlds.

Designers of scenarios, or even game systems, should remember that entertainment is one of the primary motivators in role-playing games. Even though there is a latent potential for the most vivid experiences within every scenario, there is a tremendous likelihood of abject failure as well if this is forgotten.

Gamemasters do much to keep the players engaged and delighted. This is very important, of course, but the designer should not forget himself and should, indeed, plan for his own delight as well. The only thing worse than a bored player group is a bored gamemaster. If the GM is not entertained he has no one to blame but himself. It is, after all, his task to motivate and plan things.

In planning a scenario I plan both long and short term objectives first. Long term objectives always include the intentions and desires which I wish to incorporate into this session or scenario. My philosophical ideals are long-term objectives and the list is headed by entertainment, for me and for my players. Another long term objective would be to attain the desired or intended end of the story encapsulated in the scenario. For instance, my last scenario concluded with the knighting of a number of player-characters, and providing them with land and marriages. I had to plan the scenario to allow them the opportunity for deeds appropriate to deserve such an honor.

Short term objectives are the desired events of the scenario. These take the form of challenges for the player-characters. It is critically important to challenge the characters in a number of beguiling ways. It is almost impossible to make up puzzles that are too complex, journeys that are too arduous, or encounters which are too unusual for a bunch of excited player-characters. Their solutions usually find some flaw which escaped the designer, or as often find some alternative method of success whose sheer cleverness will baffle the best game designer. Those moments of breakthroughs are the ones which players strive for and whose successes win the admiration and respect of the gamemaster. Failure is likely in these situations, and should certainly occur. A real challenge includes real dangers to the characters, just like their success will feel real to the players.

A variety of challenges will keep the game entertaining for everyone and offer the most opportunities. For example, while preparing challenges for the would-be knights I concocted a band of Irish raiders first for some man-to-man combat, then two large-scale battles against a foreign invader, and a simple bear hunt which, due to a number of critically successful rolls, turned into a hunt for a magical stag. While lasting only two days for the player-characters, the hunt actually spanned three years of campaign time. Each session was bridged with opportunities for characters to interact in non-hostile, social situations. These presented many ways for characters to reveal themselves to others, much to the enjoyment of all involved. Then when the titles were conferred some people who had done better than others received more land or other honors.

The entertainment for me, comes in watching the interaction of the characters, and how they relate to the various challenges. I am amused by one fellow's insistence on dismounting to fight under every circumstance. I am touched by a squire's foolish devotion and courage to stand and fight over the wounded body of his knight. I admire the characters' insistence upon fighting always in the front rank, and I think it is pathetic the way some of them do not know when to quit.

The players like surprises. Unusual events occur to their characters if they take the chances, and even failure proves to have been useful and educational. Now, for instance, my players know it is not trivial to pursue magical creatures through unfamiliar terrain. In the three years of their absence their liege lord died and the whole of the land has turned the worse from invasion. One character's wife had a child during the three years of his absence.

I am sure that I will be surprised by the decisions which the cuckolded character will make next week. I am looking forward to seeing their reactions when they learn that their lands were taken away because they abandoned their liege lord without explanation.

Plan things in advance, but first of all plan to be entertained. Do this by creating tough challenges for the characters, containing many possibilities and surprises. Make them live in a world of chance and opportunity where their actions will have meaning. The games themselves will then take on life of their own returning to you, the designer, all the emotion and feeling you put into it.

It sure beats the heck out of television. □

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FTL: 2448 — A science fiction role-playing game designed by Richard Tucholka. It comes in a vinyl binder with 102 pages of rules. The game covers psionics, aliens, experience levels, medical skills, radiation, toxins, disease, shuttles, star travel, star systems, climate, geology, technology, law, starports, colonies, cargo, insurance, robots, drugs, banking, hit locations, etc. It sells for $14, and is available from Tri Tac Inc, PO Box 61, Madison Heights MI 48071.

FOR AD&D

AGAINST THE CULT OF THE REPTILE GOD — This is an adventure for character levels 1-3 designed by Douglas Niles. This 28-page book describes a town afflicted by an unknown terrror. There are 27 places to visit, an inn with 25 room descriptions, another inn with 12 rooms, a temple with 22 rooms, and a two-level dungeon with 37 encounter areas. The adventure causes the characters to investigate what is terrorizing the town and remedying the situation. Published by TSR.

DANGER AT DUNWATER — Sequel to *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh,* this is an adventure for character levels 1-4 designed by Dave Browne with Don Turnbull. The 32-page adventure has lizard men gathering in force nearby and buying large quantities of weapons. The adventurers must find out why. There is a description of the lizard men's lair with 52 places to explore. Published by TSR.

FOR BEHIND ENEMY LINES

BRITISH COMMANDOES — This is book 4 for *BEL.* It is designed by Sam Lewis and describes British commando character creation, climbing, small boats, and a raid operation. It is available from FASA, PO Box 6930, Chicago IL 60680-6930.

FOR MAN, MYTH, & MAGIC

NEWGRANGE REACTIVATED — This is episode 7 of adventure 1. It is designed by Herbie Brennan, and consists of a 24-page book describing an adventure to a lost continent to which the adventurers are teleported when they reactivate Newgrange. It retails for $6 and is available from Yaquinto Publications.

THE GLASTONBURY LABYRINTH — This is episode 8 of adventure 1. Also designed by Herbie Brennan, this book is 24 pages long and describes an adventure exploring Glastonbury and its abbey. It retails for $6 and is available from Yaquinto Publications.

ASCENT TO HELL — This is episode 9, the last episode of adventure 1. It is designed by Herbie Brennan and is 24 pages long. It includes a space trip to Venus. It retails for $6 and is available from Yaquinto Publications.

FOR THE MORROW PROJECT

DAMOCLES — Designed by H. N. Voss, this 40-page adventure describes a trip to a cold-weather area and a large computer complex. The complex has five levels: surface bunkers, tunnels and access, living quarters and shops, computer, and power plant. It retails for $6.95 and is published by TimeLine.

FOR RUNEQUEST

THE SNOW KING'S BRIDE — This is a 48-page solo adventure designed by Alan LaVergne. It is designed for one experienced initiate; the object is to escort a baron's daughter to her intended over dangerous and frigid mountains. It is available for $6 plus $2 postage and handling from Chaosium Inc, PO Box 6302, Albany CA 94706-0302.

FOR SPACE OPERA

FASOLT IN PERIL — This is a 16-page adventure designed by Steven J. Richardson. This is an anti-terrorist adventure including a hijack and a research base. The base has four levels with five to 31 areas each to explore. Also includes new animal descriptions and droid encounters. It is available for $4 from FGU, PO Box 182, Roslyn NY 11576.

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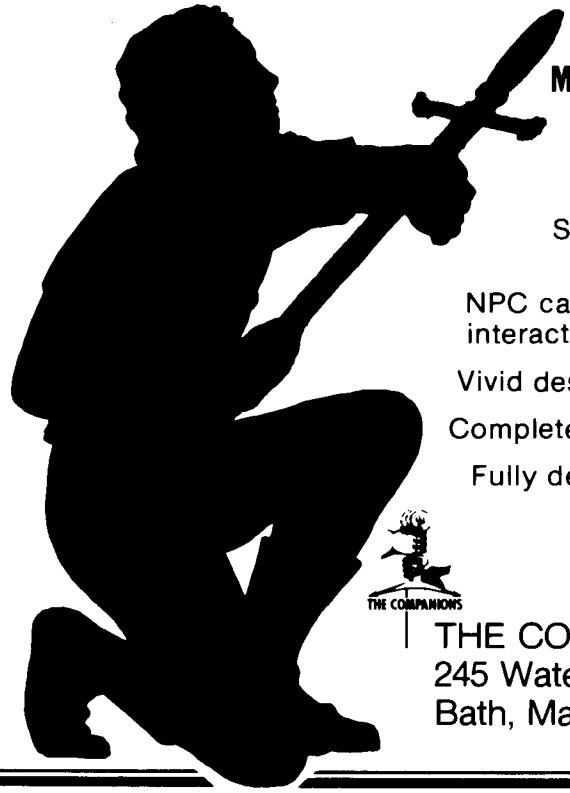

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FOR STAR FRONTIERS

VOLTURNUS, PLANET OF MYSTERY — Sequal to *Crash on Volturnus,* this 32-page module describes a search for lost explorers on a hazardous planet. Designed by Mark Acres and Tom Moldvay, it includes an encounter with a tree-dwelling race, a raid on a pirate outpost, and an exploration of a city ruin, among others. There are also twelve new alien creature descriptions. Published by TSR.

FOR VILLAINS AND VIGILANTES

FORCE — Designed by Thomas Dowd, this 24-page adventure involves blackmail by a group known as the Force. This group plans to spread a deadly virus with the use of a nuclear bomb. The scenery includes a mile-wide island and a Kansas commune. It is available for $5 from FGU.

FOR THIEVES' WORLD

THE SPIRIT STONES — This 44-page module describes an adventure to recover three artifacts. An adventure for three to five players who must travel through the Lily Garden, the Bazaar, and the Golden Lion, then meet the fence that disposes of stolen goods. Designed by Bill Fawcett, there is also an article on the S'Danzo by Lynn Abbey. It is available for $7.50 from FASA.

FOR TRAVELLER

LIBRARY DATA (N-Z) — This 48-page booklet is designed by Loren Wiseman, Marc Miller, and John Harshman. Along with the library data entries, there are articles on Imperial space, nobility, the history of the Spinward Marches, and politics in the Solomani Rim. Available for $5 from GDW, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61701.

FATE OF THE SKY RAIDERS — This 60-page booklet describes an adventure probing the mysteries of a gigantic asteroid starship, home of the mysterious race of interstellar vikings known only as the Sky Raiders. Also comes with a 17" x 11" back-printed deck-plan. It is designed by J. Andrew Keith and is available for $6 from FASA.

ADVENTURE CLASS SHIPS VOL. I — Ten ships in the 100 to 800 ton range are provided in 15mm scale on five 22" x 17" sheets. Comes boxed with 112 counters, a 16-page booklet with ship stats, and a 16-page booklet on Imperial and Zhodani military vessels with encounter charts. Designed by Jordan Wiseman, et al. Available for $12.50 from FASA.

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FOR YSGARTH

CREATURES FAIR & FELL — This is supplement two, edited by Dave Nalle. This 24-page booklet contains more pre-rolled characters, new creature descriptions, a rescue scenario, additional combat rules, and a question and answer section. Available for $2.50 plus 50 cents postage from Ragnarok Enterprises, 1402 21st St NW, Washington DC 20036.

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Cinema News & Reviews

By Larry DiTillio

Back in issue 24, David Dunham of San Antonio, Texas, said I had too long an introduction to my column. Not wanting to incur any bad karma in Texas (I've been there; it's extremely large) I want to apologize to David. At the same instant, I feel compelled to defend the strictly personal ramblings which make this column fun to write. Such ramblings take place in introductions to columns such as "Sword of Hollywood," mainly because us poor columnists always feel compelled to lay newsy-type facts on our readers. Our written words are directed toward one theme (Gigi, my love, this is for all of us) to which we must adhere. Such is it with Michael Stackpole when he does "Arcane Grafitti" for *Sorcerer's Apprentice,* or John Sapienza when he lends his detailed analytic talent to figure reviews for *DW,* or Paul Jaquays when he graces *DW* with "Adventure by Design." The GMs of the magazine world, your Tadashis, Yureks, Lizs, Tims, Rudys, Kims etc. get to write *editorials* and tell you who they are. But us columnists — *NOOOOOOOOO!* And now David, and fellow gamers, the news . . . .

V — Not the one by Thomas Pynchon (and if you don't know who that is, you should). *V* is an original four-hour dramatic mini-series coming to NBC sometime in 1983. It concerns the sudden appearance of dozens of huge spaceships in all of Earth's major cities. These spaceships, some five miles in diameter, contain life forms who are called by earth folk "the visitors." These aliens seem both human and humane at first, but *ah ha,* some secret nature lies beneath, waiting to emerge. Little more than that is known by Ye Ole Sword at the moment, but it sounds sufficiently juicy.

By the way — The fantasy trend in cinema is over. Don't panic. It generated enough box office bucks to insure enough to keep us happy, if not totally cloyed. What you will see is more fantasy/science fiction on television. Being a derivative art, television follows box office bucks. How do I know the fantasy trend is over? I watch the movie industry as closely as I watch the game biz. I work in both, thanks to many good friends. Last year, the major studios and independents had a multitude of fantasy projects on their soon-to-be-released schedules. This year, a few. The next trend is "love stories," romantic stuff. Since I doubt a romantic role-playing game is currently in the works (we all have or will play such games anyway), you may see less news and more specific coverage in the future. And so, let's see what's coming up in '83.

Soon or even already in your local Bijou — *Strange Invaders* — Outer space visitors embroiled in romance? That's what Orion Pictures says. It stars Paul Le Mat (from *Melvin and Howard* and *American Grafitti*) and Nancy Allen (*Dressed to Kill* and *Blow Out*). Whether it will or won't enhance your *Traveller* game is up to you.

House of Long Shadows — If anyone beats me into line for this picture they'll have to be there two weeks before it opens. Catch this lineup — Vincent Price, Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee and David Carradine. That cast for a horror-movie nut like Ye Ole Sword is guaranteed to cause excessive salivation. It has something to do with old English manors and ghosts and the plot's probably thinner than a Cheech-and-Chong flick, but it has to be a classic. By the by, while I am touting this film, I want to answer a question that a friend of mine once asked — Why do I mention horror flicks in this column? There are two answers to that question. In flicks like *The Blob,* a GM can get an idea of a monster's movement and capability, thus evening out the numbers-vs-numbers of role-play combat with a role-play feeling. Also what frightens people, what creates tension on a very basic level, what is truly evil augments both player and GM in acting out characters and situations. Oops — there is a third answer, too, to wit — it's stuff for *Call of Cthulhu,* probably the best actual role-playing game on the market (right now — but in the coming year we will see more such games).

Springing up in Spring — *Twice Upon a Time* — A light-hearted fantasy done in a unique form of animation, produced by George Lukas. *The Wicked Lady* — Faye Dunaway will be swashing and buckling as a notorious 19th-century highwaywoman named Lady Skelton. I love the entire idea. It's time female gamers had some good adventuress models on the screen. *High Road to China* — For those of you learning to love the role-playing adventure in such games as *Daredevils, Mercenaries, Spies and Private Eyes* (with *Reckless Adventure* coming soon) comes this film, an adventure set right after World War I in the Middle and Far East. It stars Tom Selleck.

Summer's sizzling — *Krull* — Still trying to track down this one. Its a multi-million-dollar interplanetary fairy tale with a prince, a lady and some *very* strange creatures. I think it might be a sleeper (Hollywood jargon for an unexpected biggie). *Blue Thunder* — this is for the *Espionage* and *Merc* gamers. Blue Thunder is a super-chopper used by Vietnam vet Roy Scheider to fight terrorism during the 1984 Olympics. *The Keep* — Now get this folks, a Nazi commando takes over a castle inhabited by a vampire. Yup, that's the plot. I personally love it; it's lurid as they come, but I have to have doubts, since I saw this story some few years ago as a short on *Night Gallery.* It starred Frances Lederer as Dracula, putting the bite on Nazis who had invaded his country and castle and was called something like *The Devil to Pay*. Oh well . . . *Yellowbeard* — Again, try and beat me into line. A pirate picture with the Monty Python gang, Cheech-and-Chong, the late-much-missed Marty Feldman, and Madeline Kahn! Now that's a game . . . Already mentioned but worth mentioning again for this summer — *Superman III, Jaws 3-D, Octopussy* and *Never Say Never Again* (double Bond), *Twilight Zone,* and of course *Return of the Jedi* (yes, my friends, it has been retitled and claimed as the last in the series; do we believe it?).

Fall and Winter — Not a whole lot, my friends, I told you the trend was dying off. Winter will bring *Brainstorm,* a high-tech thriller with effects by Doug Trumbull (and sadly the last film of Ms. Natalie Wood), *Once Upon a Time in America,* wherein spaghetti western king Sergio Leone works his violent, stylish magic on the gangster film genre (*Gangbusters* is a role-playing game, so don't ask why I mentioned it) and best of all for adventure buffs is *Greystoke: The Creation of Tarzan and His Epic Adventures* — supposedly the original Edgar Rice Burroughs story filmed as written (now, you don't believe the Tarzan that was run across the screen grunting for all these years is the Tarzan of the books, do you?).

Well, that's how the year shapes up so far, friends. Not overly filled with expensive sword-and-sorcery or science fiction; lots of adventure, though.

From the Past — I have seen *The Warlord* numerous times and have yet to really pin down what time period it is in. Charleton Heston plays a heavily-armored, arrogant nobleman who is holding a run-down, smallish castle for some overlord. There are Viking types raiding the shoreline, Druid types flitting around the woods and a gorgeous girl, but who knows what it all means. The reason to watch and revel in *The Warlord* is some of the best medieval action ever put on screen, from individual duels to large-scale melees and siege combats. Moreover you'll love Richard Boone as the Warlord's chief sidekick, a growling brute of a warrior who carries a troll-sized club which he wields with deadly effect. Forget the boring romance and watch the fights and the intrigue. It's good.

Next time around — Hopefully an interview with one of the stars of *Wizards and Warriors,* an upcoming live-action series for TV, and a look at animated sword-and-sorcery on the tube. Keep those games growing, keep those stories flowing and above all have fun! Adios Amoebas . . . . □

VIDEODROME

Director . . . . . .David Cronenberg
Producer . . . . . .Claude Heroux
Photography . . . . .Mark Irwin
Make-up Effects . . .Rick Baker

CAST

Max Renn . . . . . .James Woods
Nicki Brand . . . . . .Deborah Harry
Bianca . . . . . .Sonja Smits

Reviewed by John Nubbin

Once again, David Cronenberg has had the nerve to do what most of his contemporaries have not – make a serious science fiction film. At a time when most movie goers are of the opinion that *E.T.* is the best science fiction film they ever saw (good it is, but science fiction it isn't), it is more than merely refreshing to see so powerful a movie as *Videodrome* – it is a sign of hope for the future.

The story goes as follows: Max Renn, part-owner of a cable TV station which panders to violent and pornographic tastes, needs more product for his audience. He comes across a new show, "Videodrome." It is a single-set production with no continuing cast, dialog, or script. People are merely brought in, chained up, and tortured. Understandably, Max wants the show for his station.

While trying to track it down, he meets Nicki Brand, a pop-psychologist with sado-masochistic tendencies. He becomes involved with her – she wants to become involved with Vidoedrome. He warns her to stay away from it. He has the word that the show isn't a production; it's real. She disappears. He begins looking for Videodrome.

Cut and dried, it sounds mostly like any of the dozen or two slash-em-up's that come out each year. Anyone familiar with Cronenberg's work knows better, though. It is not long before Max finds that watching Videodrome causes physical changes in people. They begin to hallucinate; their bodies mutate, taking on new abilities, all because of the transmission of Videodrome.

To tell what happens to the characters in the film would be unfair. The various twists and surprises that come in the second two-thirds of the movie are unlike anything ever seen on the screen before. Once again, not a new statement when made about Cronenberg.

All of Cronenberg's films have told the same story, though in different ways. In each, there is a sense of purging, a need to expunge something from the human body, something often of a sexual nature. In *They Came From Within*, it was a sentient venereal disease. *The Brood* contained demons born through self-induced pregnancy; mental powers in *Scanners* came from drugs taken by mothers during pregnancy. *Rabid* included a prostitute who transmitted the dread disease of rabies. Now, in *Videodrome* the horror is born from watching sexual torture.

Each of the pictures has had a point to make. In the latest, Cronenberg points at television and the dangers of its misuse. Television is shown as a weak point in our social defense order; not living up to its potential. Pandering to the stupid, the unbalanced, the childish, the medium comes across as a reckless titillator, pacifying through over-stimulation. In Cronenberg's not so far off future, it is no longer a marvel or even entertainment, but is now a staple of life, flat and tasteless, but necessary.

When Max first begins to think he might be in danger, he gets a gun. When we first see him with it, he knows nothing about it; he can't hold it properly, nor can he tell the clip from the cleaning brush. Later in the flim, though, he has no trouble killing with it.

Nicki runs a radio show where she tells people they need help, and sends them off for it fast. She herself, though, is a violence freak destined to end up in a bad way, the victim of her own unnatural cravings.

Likewise, even the people in charge of Videodrome can not really describe how it works, but they have little trouble using it to reach their own ends. And that seems to be the point of *Videodrome*.

It was once thought that television could usher in a bold new era of man's exploitation of the arts, history, science, learning.

As we all know, the medium instead became characterized as a wasteland which changed its colors many times over the years, but never its attitudes. Never used as a lever to boost man onto a higher plateau, it remained a gaudy toy, one which now, many people don't know how to live without.

In *Videodrome,* these themes are played to the hilt. Both those who run regular TV and the Videodromers are in the game to further their own ends. Max makes his money showing pornography on TV. The Dromes want to wipe out moral decay by exposing all the "porn-watching perverts" to Videodrome, and thus wiping them out. The movie becomes believable to a great degree because the motivations of the characters are believable.

In the concept of the Videodrome, Cronenberg has created his most frightening horror to date. The visions seen by Max are truly terrifying. This is so because, for the most part, they center around a most mundane thing in everyone's life, a television set. In one scene, Max takes sadistic, gleeful pleasure in whipping a set which has Nicki's image on its screen. In another scene, he buries his head in the bulging screen of his set because Nicki's image calls him to it. Both scenes may sound laughable when read on this paper, but seen in the context of the film, they become tools of unease and discomfort used by Cronenberg.

Videodrome is unsettling more than it is shocking. It has its horrifying moments, but for the most part, it is the type of film allowing its effects to creep up on the audience, rather than throwing it at them from the screen. It is a forceful picture, showing naive people in positions of power, using their power for their own ends, damning both the consequences and the people in its way. It is a top-notch thriller, a hard-hitting commentary which does not stop at the boundaries of reality, but plunges deep into nightmare to show a contemporary evil in the brightest possible light.

Videodrome may well be the best science-fiction movie of the year. □

Gossip

by GIGI D'ARN

Dear Tadashi,

How could you censor my last column like that? And over such a small matter! Now those people will never know what I think of them.

Anyway, happy new year! My industry sources tell me that many store owners who were worried about the recession did not see any slowdown in game sales. Game sales, in fact, are up slightly from last year. With the economy recovering, 1983 should be a good year for everyone.

How was your trip to Japan, by the way? Three weeks in paradise must have had some effect.

Rumor reports that the *D&D* movie project is seeking a producer. TSR might try to finance it themselves, but raising the $20 million budget will be difficult. The script by JIM GOLDMAN *(Lion in Winter, Robin and Marian)* has been completed, however. If TSR can pull it off, it would mean gaming has reached the big time in the entertainment industry.

The 1982 *OMNI* Magazine's Ten Best Games awards included Steve Jackson Games' *Car Wars*. Among the honorable mentions were Eon's *Darkover* and Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu*. Congratulations to all.

Is Heritage actively seeking a buyer? So far, they have contacted a major game distributor, Mayfair Games, and Avalon Hill. Asking price is in the high six-figure range; I doubt they will get that much.

Activision has licensed the use of Schubel & Son's *Starmaster*. Activision will use the name for their arcade video game. Though no money figure has been divulged, Schubel & Son plans to use the proceeds to purchase additional computer equipment and an offset printing press to expand its play-by-mail game business.

JOHN HUBER is researching Christian responses to adventure role-playing games for a book. Interested parties can write to him at PO Box 21867, Milwaukee, WI 5322. Christians responding are requested to submit a a scriptural defence of their position (pro or con), for the Bible is a documentation of the Christian faith.

Special Chaosium Section

Tadashi, you always complain that I never say enough about Chaosium — well, take a look at this.

If I haven't mentioned it already, Chaosium has received license from Warp Graphics to do a game based on the *Elfquest* comic book. As I understand it, the company was not originally interested; they have a heavily-committed publishing schedule, but could not resist the possibilities in using Wendy Pini's artwork for the game.

Does STEVE JACKSON have a grudge against Chaosium? The January issue of *The Space Gamer* left out Chaosium's *RuneQuest, Stormbringer,* and *Call of Cthulhu* from their 1982 game survey. After all, *RuneQuest* only came in second after Steve's *The Fantasy Trip* in their last poll. Is he afraid *RuneQuest* might come in first this time? Didn't something like this also happen last year? All I can say is that the survey doesn't count. I'm going to think it's rigged unless I hear otherwise. At least they should admit to incompetence.

KEN ST. ANDRE reports he is getting out of gaming for a while. He has removed himself from Chaosium's *Pendragon* project and will devote time to playing with his new computers.

Chaosium has rescinded Martian Metal's *RuneQuest* miniatures license. MM in two years has come out with less than a dozen figures. Chaosium is yet to receive a single penny. That means no royalties to those original designers of *RuneQuest*. Does this mean the door is open to those nifty Citadel *RuneQuest* figures that the English got to play with?

Badge seen at Wintercon: "Cthulhu Cthucks!"

Chaosium is gearing up for their *Lankhmar* project. Present plan is to do it the same way as *Thieves' World* with all those game companies again contributing. It will be heroic to be sure. When will you ever learn. You guys must like torment. I heard the editor had a breakdown last time after dealing with so many companies and authors.

End Special Chaosium Section.

Have you seen those 30-sided dice? I do not know what good they are — manufacturers are looking for a game company to design games around them. How did this hobby get so gimmicky?

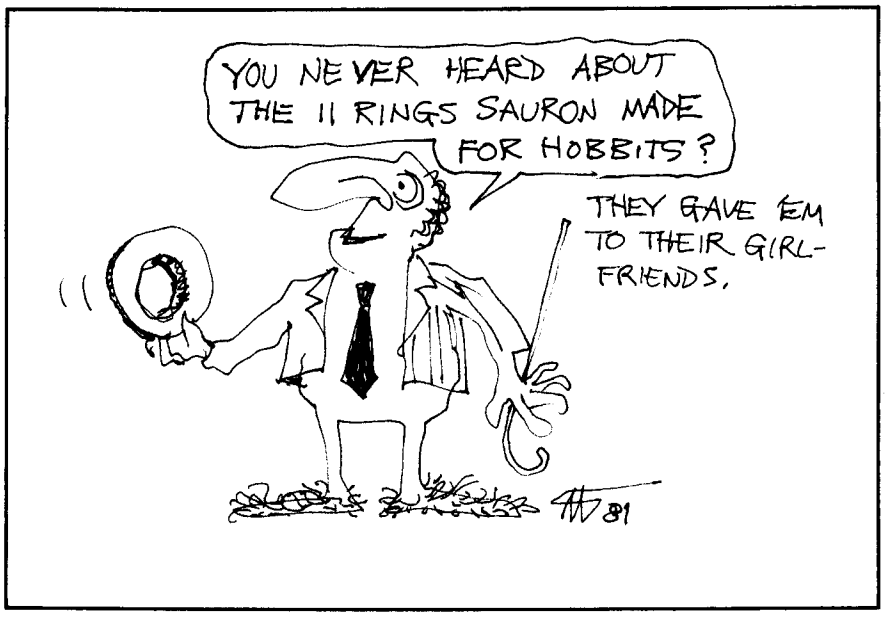
My, my, do I ever sound vindictive this month. It must be because my apartment just went condo and I have to look for a new place.

Don't you think those *Villains & Vigilantes* modules from Fantasy Games Unlimited are a bit expensive? About 20 pages of material for $5? Your product *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth* at $10 has 80 tight pages. If the buyers really don't care, maybe you guys should save yourselves all that extra work.

Love, and hope I find a place with a pool,

Gigi

By Alexis Gilliland



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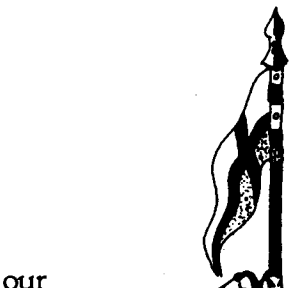

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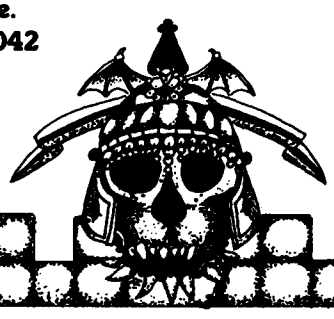

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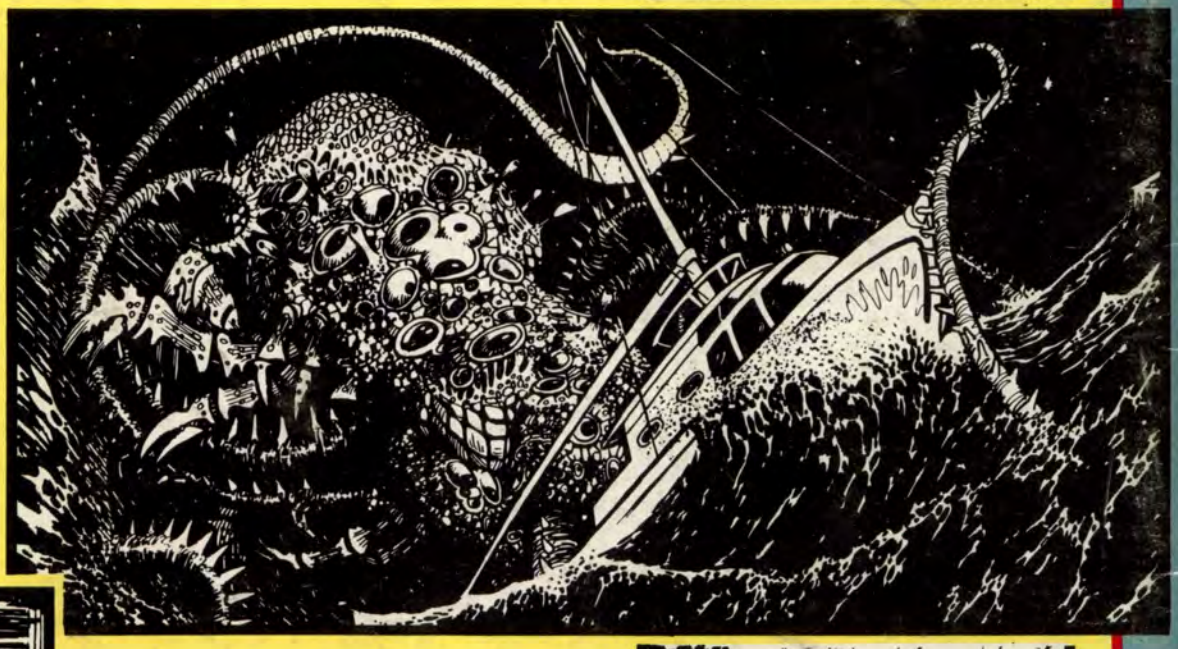

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